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Sound Heard & Unheard

ABSTRACT SOUND
NATURE & RAGA
CULTURE AND SOCIETY
ANNA SAHEB HAZARE



Persian miniature, 'Portrait of a Prince'
Muhammad Harawi, Safavid period, mid- sixteenth century.

RED LEAD

Indian canonical texts have discussed various shades of red and their divergent sources. One of them, Red Lead, (Darada or Sindura) stands for crimson (Sona) and for a soft red shade (Mrdurakta). Red Lead or Minium, a dense, fine textured orange-red pigment is one of the earliest artificially prepared pigments still in use today. It is prepared by roasting white lead in open air till it attains a deep hue. It is ground for twelve hours with water and after a respite of five days, again for a full day. Neem gum is used as a binding medium for this pigment.

Earliest use of red lead probably dates to the time of the development of lead metallurgy in both China and the Near East. Vitruvius recorded its preparation. Chinese texts of the 5th. Century refer to it. Some suggest that artificial minium was brought into China from India, while others hold that it was imported into India from China during the Sung Dynasty period(10th-13th Century), since the Indians called it Cinapishta, Chinese flour.

It has been identified on wall paintings and on silk paintings from Tun Huang in Central Asia (10th-11th Centuries). It has also been on the wall paintings of Central China (5th-9th Century). The earliest known use of red lead in Japan is on the wall paintings of the Horyuji Temple(7th-8th Century). It has been extensively used in Tibetan and Nepalese thangka paintings and in Persian, Turkish and Indian miniatures. The word, 'miniature' comes from the Latin 'miniare', to write with minium.

Good quality minium is still prepared in Jaipur.

Minium usually darkens and turns brown with exposure to air and this can be observed on water colours and wall paintings. The mechanism of darkening is still not completely understood. Occasionally, the red lead has whitened as in some of the paintings in Pompeii and 16th Century Japanese temples.

Like most lead containing compounds, the pigment is poisonous.

-Anupam Sah-

Final Year Student of Conservation,
National Museum Institute, New Delhi.
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Editor

Rukmini Sekhar

Guest Editor

Akhila Ghosh

Poetry Editor

Mayura Tiwari

Editorial Assistant

Jayashree Menon Kurup

Subscriptions &

Finance

Sujata Pandey

Editorial Address

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Carnatic music has lost another landmark in the history of its propagation. The sudden demise of Santhanam in a cruel car accident on 24 June 1992, has created an irreplaceable void in South Indian Classical music.

Santhanam was not a musician of mean calibre. His intense training with his father, the great maestro, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer, on and off stage, reflected in his musicianship thereafter. In keeping with the tradition of the *guru-shishya* paramparas, Santhanam spent his prime years soaking in the experience of the music of the greats; and in a short career span of twenty years, Santhanam took Carnatic music to an unprecedented level of popularity.

Santhanam's music was to himself, a unique exploration into *rasa*. Retaining the vibrant aesthetics of his father, he allowed his own natural melodic spontaneity to flow



MAHARAJAPURAM
SANTHANAM

into the conventional modes of musical rendition. Like most path-breakers, he was controversially known as a great

among his *rasikas*, and as too much of a populist among his critics.

Santhanam was an inspired composer. He drew his inspiration from his devotion to the Paramacharya of the Shankaracharya Mutt in Kancheepuram. His *tillanas* in *Revathi* and *Ranjini* and his *Chandrashekara* in *Hindolam* are shining examples of his talent for creative convergences between *Sahitya*, *laya*, *raga* and *bhava*.

Santhanam's death could be considered to be the departure of the most popular musician of his time. He was equally liked by the young and the old, and drew phenomenal crowds at every performance. In his untimely departure at the peak of his musical experience, Santhanam has left behind thousands of unfulfilled music-lovers who mourn, in stunned silence, another significant loss in a generation of musicians. ●

Sharada Ramanathan



The wise leader speaks rarely and briefly. After all, no other natural outpouring goes on and on. It rains and then it stops. It thunders and then it stops.

The leader teaches more through being than through doing. The quality of one's silence conveys more than long speeches.

Follow your inner wisdom. In order to know your inner wisdom, you have to be still.

The leader who knows how to be still and feel deeply will probably be effective. But the leader who chatters and boasts and tries to impress the group has no center and carries little weight. If you are simply being egocentric, or if you are just trying to be dramatic, you will neither do good nor look good.

Remember that the method is awareness-of-process. Reflect. Be still.

VINAYAK KRISHNA GOKAK



S. ALEXANDER

We pay our respectful homage to one of the greatest literateurs of all time, V.K. Gokak, who died on April 28th, 1992 in Bombay. He was eighty two.

Gokak was the pioneer of modern Kannada poetry. Indeed, the soil of his native Dharwad and the lyricism of the Kannada language literally flowed into the several books of poetry which he wrote, as well as into his plays and novels. His education at Oxford, his wide travels abroad and his exposure to other cultures made him take up the English language in which he was no less proficient. Gokak combined the rare qualities of the sensuous poet with those of the pragmatic sociologist, political thinker, educationist and administrator that he became. While being supremely concerned with the reality of his lifetime, Gokak was ever the poet-mystic, in constant search of that intangible and elusive vision which cries out in his poetry.

In *Cheluvina Niluvu*, he writes:

*The goal in the distance fades away.
Life whispers its own secret, "wait".
The panting self is sought to beg.*

By its own weakness, called its fate.

In a series of forty three lyrics, *In Life's Temple*, Gokak explores seven archetypal characters in almost Wordsworthian fashion, coming together in search of Integral Living.

*Woman and man will, to the end of
Time,
Pursue the One that lives in them as
two.*

A cryptic remark on our present national leaders goes thus:

*But cunning had usurped
Their place and triumphed in their
name.*

Gokak was a worshipper of Nature. He wrote prolifically and in tensely on Nature, in fact, his works were more like meditations upon it, progressing into a philosophical realm. In *Suratkal Beach*, he meditates on the crescent bend in the Yamuna River flowing near the Taj Mahal:

*I am the Soul of Silence and
you are its word.
I am the straight line whose
curve you are.
I am the still centre before whom you
bend
into a crescent for ever and anew.*

While being spiritually contemplative and philosophical in his view of things, Gokak had a dynamic side to his personality which empathised with the tumultuous and perturbing events of his lifetime-Narrow sectarianism, the fascism of Hitler, social inequality and suppression of women, the lethargy of the young and out-moded practices continued in the name of tradition.

Gokak was an undying patriot bursting with emotion when he wrote about India:

*She is not full-fledged like the West;
But she is the fledgeling of my
morrow.
Not mighty like the United States;
But she is might yet in its infancy.
Whoever said this fair land was foul
And did not bite his tongue?*

Gokak's role as an educationist cannot be underestimated. He was a Professor of English, a Director, and a Vice Chancellor (Bangalore University.)

He was the President of the Central Sahitya Akademi. A very widely travelled man, Gokak lectured in Universities and institutions all over the world, and read his poems at leading poetry congresses. He won the Jnanpeth Award in 1990 for his contribution to Kannada literature. Gokak's demise is the demise of a great writer and humanist.

Rukmini Sekhar

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note our new address. All correspondence to THE EYE should now be addressed to:

THE EYE,
39, Anand Lok,
New Delhi-110 049



Dear Editor,

Conservation, the main theme of the issue has been well covered. It is nice to see young conservators doing a fine job as Guest Editors. The only snag is that in the list of conservation laboratories in the country, they have left out the conservation laboratory of the Government Museum, Madras, which was the pioneering lab. in the country and which has made immense contribution to conservation research and work. It also runs a refresher course on 'Care of Museum Objects'.

*Prof. N. Harinarayana,
Director of Museums (Retd)
Tamil University,
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu*

Dear Editor,

In the Mar-Apr '92 issue the contributors have rightly broken down the (legitimate) myth that surrounds the neo-consumerist philosophy. The questionable 'rational mind' serves as a buttress to this philosophy. Being a student in a very state-of-the-art subject of Space Science I have been observing the methods adopted by researchers (including myself) in current times and wish to share my observations with the readers of THE EYE.

The consumerist and commercial polity has crept and swept through most "modern scientific minds." It can be observed by a very keen and unbiased mind that the deadly disease is not just in the confines of government or day to day social environments alone. The motto of most modern researchers is to sell their so called knowledge. For this, a vast network of a market is first established. Then systematically, mediocre ideas are coated with colourful conclusions and sold within the same system to co-perpetrators, of course with a give and take policy. The number of journals in each topic and the number of topics themselves have exponentially increased. The queue for acceptance of papers into each journal day by day lengthened and as a result "rapid journals" christened "communications" emerged. The number of papers a researcher has to his credit is the measure of his success.

The whole idea of "quest for knowledge", which a few decades back nestled in noble minds, has been commercialized and brought into the world of survival technicians. Research is now a means of survival rather than a means of fame and success, a step higher in degradation. The one who refuses to succumb to this kind of professionalism shall perish. However the initial inertia of devoted and truthful research has been able to sustain a few islands above the brackish waters. But it wouldn't be long before the ice melts to consume these too!

*Ranganathan Srikanth
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI-48109
USA*



MALCOLM BALDWIN

Dear Editor,

With regard to the magazine itself, I'm of the opinion, that criticism of any sort, would be sheer 'nit-picking', as the material provided in the last issues was exemplary in every aspect.

A very positive result, I noticed, was an intriguing and interesting lift in the quality of conversation. You will understand what I mean as I elucidate. Conversation has begun to lose its versatility. People (every time they sit in a drawing room), grab hold of the same stale, yesterday's left-overs, "BOFORS", "I.M.F.", "THE GULF WAR", and dissect them (not that there is any portion left undissected) into the same inevitable miniscules. Mind you, the topics involve political ideologies, and so invariably the tension is tangible, the monotony unbearable and the results of the conversation disgustingly predictable.

The circulation of THE EYE however, has brought a refreshing change to the scenario. With every issue, we are left with at least ten thought provoking and original topics. And having read the matter provided, which is new in ideology and unbiased by political opinion (a feature, absent, to a large extent, in the literature provided in this country), it becomes simple, yet challenging to launch into an indepth discussion that opens fascinating avenues at every juncture, and keeps the human thinking process from becoming a cess-pool of stagnation! Kudos to THE EYE in this respect.

*Archana Raghavan
Cochin, Kerala*

*"A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw,
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on the dulcimer she played
Singing of Mount Abora"
-Coleridge-*

"Music, highest of the arts, springs from a source deeper than words and nearer to the innate order of the soul.....when Coleridge made his damsel play not a violin, clavichord, lute or flute, but specifically a dulcimer, it was with intent; she plays upon the chords of harmony that underlie all creation"

-Kathleen Raine-

This issue of THE EYE is about that very harmony enshrined in sound or nada as we know it in India. In a world half crazed by loud action, we rarely perceive the need to fine tune our minds to hear the delicate nuances of the anahad, or the inaudible.

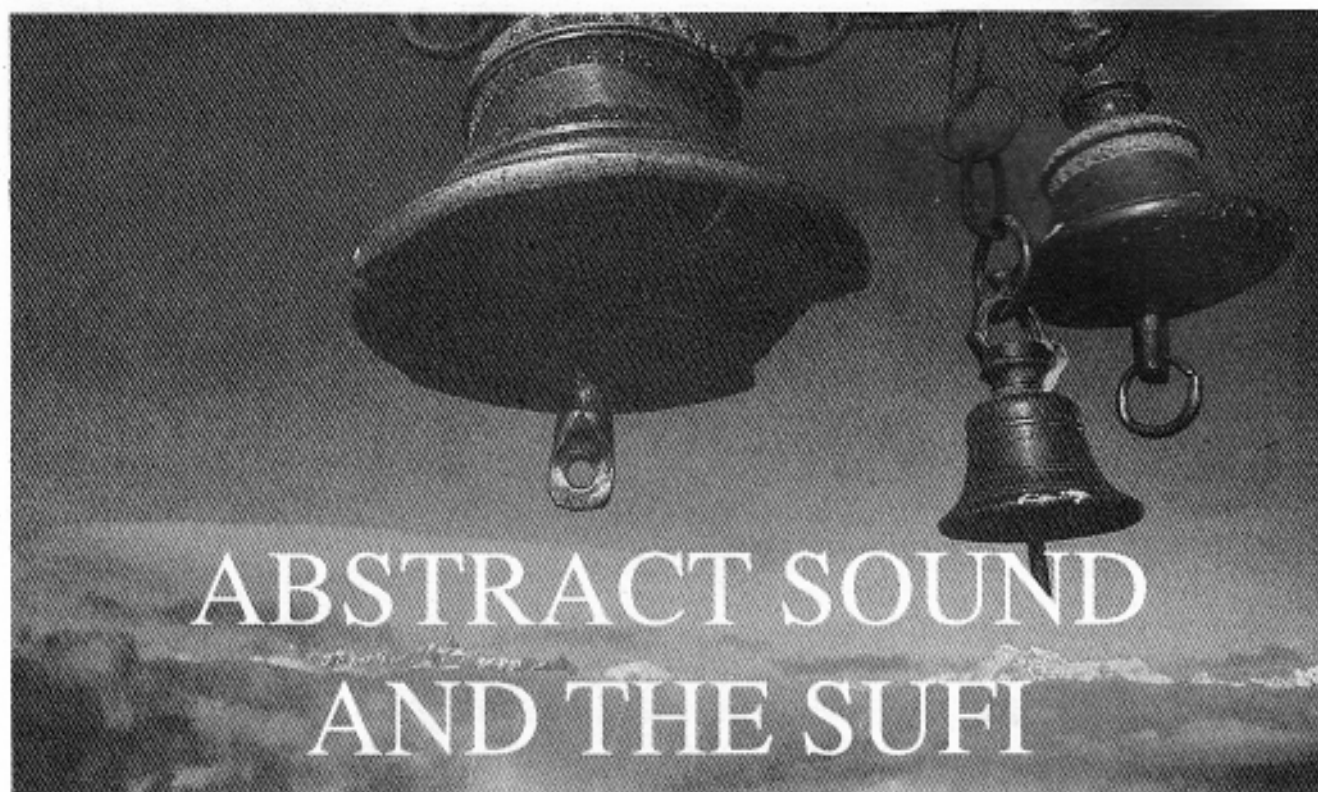
Often we take music for granted. It is the culmination, yet, of the finest sensibilities of man, who plucked the existing sounds from the universe, stringed them together and produced unparalleled beauty. More amazing still, he discovered that he could ride upon a single note of beauty into a realm of magnificent abstraction.

In this issue, we have attempted to explore the origins of sound and its gradual and gentle manipulation into music. In the Indian context, raga was the most natural and organic outcome. As we put the issue together, we could not help but wonder at the minute way in which sound grew out of nature, how sound is nature and how sound simply is.

We are grateful to Akhila Ghosh who got excited by the theme and agreed to be our Guest Editor.

We hope your journey through sound will bring you to the magic portals of music and the innate harmony of the universe.





ABSTRACT sound is called *Saut-e-Sarmad* by the Sufis; all space is filled with it. The vibrations of this sound are too fine to be either audible or visible to the material ears or eyes, since it is even difficult for the eyes to see the form and colour of the ethereal vibrations on the external plane. It was the *Saut-e-Sarmad*, the sound of the abstract plane, which Mohammad heard in the cave of Ghar-e-Hira when he became lost in his divine ideal. The Qur'an refers to this sound in the words, 'Be! and all became.' Moses heard this very sound on Mount Sinai, and the same word was audible to Christ when absorbed in the wilderness. Shiva heard the same *Anahad Nada* during his *samadhi* in the cave of the Himalayas.

The flute of Krishna is symbolic of the same sound. This sound is the source of all revelation to the Masters, to whom it is revealed from within; it is because of this that they know and teach one and the same truth.

The Sufi knows of the past, present and future, and about all things in life, by being able to know the direction of sound. Every aspect of one's being in

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

"Music is Sound and Rhythm. And if Sound and Rhythm were understood in their nature and character, then music would not only be used as a pastime but would become a source of healing and upliftment."

Thus wrote Hazrat Inayat Khan, the Indian Sufi mystic who lived in India. He died abroad in 1927. He was a musician of renown who followed the practice of the ancient Sufis in expressing esoteric truths in terms of sound and music. He arrived at a stage where he "touched the music of the spheres and all life became music". Here are two essays, *Abstract Sound and Rhythm*.

which sound manifests has a peculiar effect upon life, for the activity of vibrations has a special effect in every direction. The knower of the mystery of sound knows the mystery of the whole universe. Whoever has followed the strains of this sound has forgotten all earthly distinctions and differences, and has reached that goal of truth in which everything unites. Spaces are within the body as well as around it; in other words the body is in the space and the space is in the body.

This being the case, the sound of the abstract is always going on within, around and about man. Man does not hear it as a rule, because his consciousness is entirely centred in his material existence. Man becomes so absorbed in his experiences in the external world through the medium of the physical body, that, space, with all its wonders of light and sound, appears to him, blank.

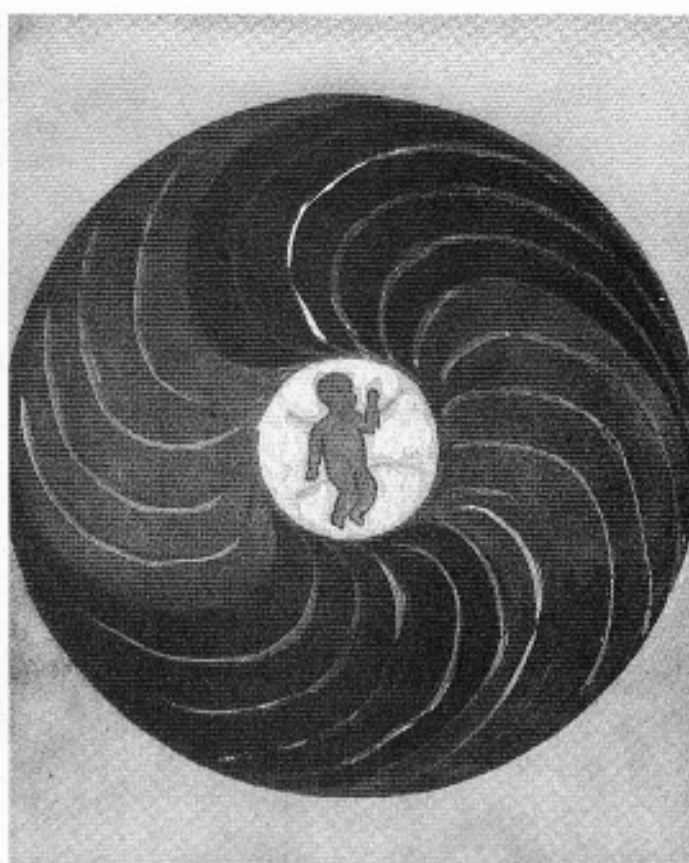
This can be easily understood by studying the nature of colour. There are many colours that are quite distinct by themselves, yet when mixed with others of still brighter hue they become

altogether eclipsed; even bright colours when embroidered with gold, silver, diamonds or pearls serve merely as a background to the dazzling embroidery. So it is with the abstract sound compared with the sounds of the external world. The limited volume of earthly sounds is so concrete that it dims the effect of the sound of the abstract to the sense of hearing, although in comparison to it the sounds of the earth are like that of a whistle to a drum. When the abstract sound is audible, all other sounds become indistinct to the mystic.

The sound of the abstract is called *Anahad* in the Vedas, meaning unlimited sound. The Sufis name it *Sarmad*, which suggests the idea of intoxication. The word intoxication is here used to signify upliftment, the freedom of the soul from its earthly bondage. Those who are able to hear the *Saut-e-Sarmad* and meditate on it are relieved from all worries, anxieties, sorrows, fears and diseases; and the soul is freed from captivity in the senses and in the physical body. The soul of the listener becomes the all-pervading consciousness, and his spirit becomes the battery which keeps the whole universe in motion.

Some train themselves to hear the *Saut-e-Sarmad* in the solitude on the sea shore, on the river bank, and in the hills and dales; others hear it while sitting in the caves of the mountains, or when wandering constantly through forests and deserts, keeping themselves in the wilderness apart from the haunts of men. Yogis and ascetics blow *sing* (a horn) or *shankha* (a shell), which awakens in them this inner tone. Dervishes play *Nai* or *Algosa* (a double flute) for the same purpose. Bells and gongs in churches and temples are meant to suggest to the thinker the same sacred sound.

This sound develops through ten



ROLLINGEN FOUNDATION

Some train themselves to hear the Saut-e-Sarmad in the solitude on the sea shore, on the river bank, and in the hills and dales; others hear it while sitting in the caves of the mountains, or when wandering constantly through forests and deserts.



different aspects because of its manifestation through ten different tubes of the body; it sounds like thunder, the roaring of the sea, the jingling of bells, running water, the buzzing of bees, the twittering of sparrows, the Vina, the whistle, or the sound of *shankha* until it finally becomes *Hu*, the most sacred of all sounds.

This sound *Hu* is the beginning and end of all sounds, be they from man, bird, beast, or thing. A careful study will prove this fact. Listen to the sound of the steam engine or of a mill, or the echo of bells or gongs. You can hear *Hu*.

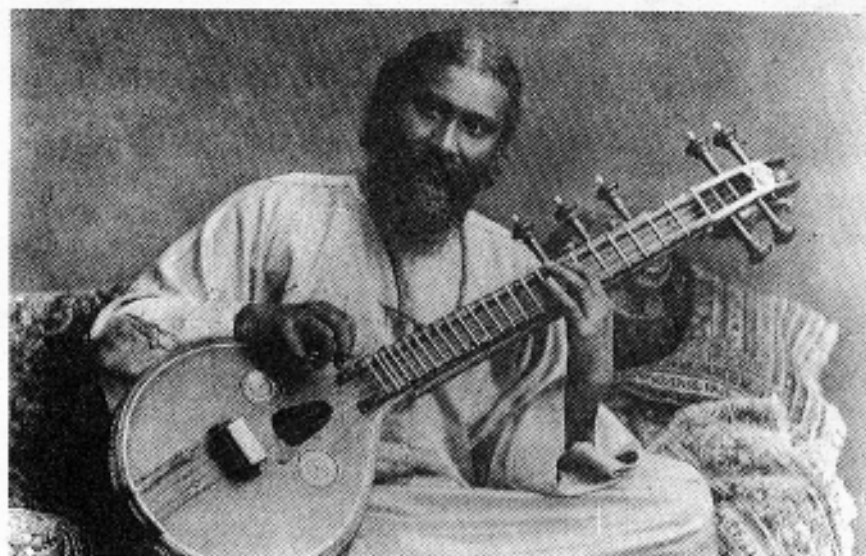
The sound, *Hu* is most sacred; the mystics called it *Ism-e-Azam*, the name of the Most High, for it is the origin and end of every

sound as well as the background of each word. The word *Hu* is the spirit of all sounds and of all words, and is hidden within them all, as the spirit in the body. It does not belong to any language, but no language can help belonging to it. This word is not only uttered by human beings, but is repeated by animals and birds. This is the word mentioned in the Bible as existing before the light came into being, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

The mystery of *Hu* is revealed to the Sufi who journeys through the path of initiation. Truth is called *Haq* by a Sufi. If we divide the word *Haq* into two parts, its assonant sounds become *hu ek*, *Hu* signifying truth, and *ek* in Hindustani meaning one, and both together expressing one truth. *Haqiqat* in Arabic means the essential truth, *Hakim* means master, and *Hakim* means knower, all of which words express the essential characteristics of life.

Aluk is the sacred word that the Vairagis, the adepts of India, use as their

The word Allah, if divided into three parts may be interpreted as 'The One who comes from nothing'. El or Ellah has the same meaning as Allah. The words found in the Bible-Eloi, Elohim and Hallelujah, are related to the word Allahu..



sacred chant. In the word *Aluk* are expressed two words, *al* meaning, the, and *Haq*, truth.

The sound *Hu* becomes limited in the word *Ham*, for the letter *m* closes the lips. This word in Hindustani expresses limitation because *Ham* means I or we, both of which words signify ego. The word *Hamsa* is the sacred word of the yogis which illumines the ego with the light of reality. The word *Huma* in the Persian language stands for a fabulous bird. There is a belief that if the *Huma* bird sits for a moment on the head of anybody it is a sign that he will become a king. Its true explanation is, that when a man's thoughts so evolve that they break all limitation, then he becomes as a king. It is the limitation of language that it can only describe the Most High as *something* like a king. It is said in the old traditions that Zoroaster was born of a *Huma* tree. This explains the words in the Bible, 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' In the word *Huma*, *hu* represents spirit, and the word *mah* in Arabic means water. In English the word 'human' explains two facts which are

characteristic of humanity: *Hu* means God and *man* means mind, which word comes from the Sanskrit *mana*, mind being the ordinary man. *Human* therefore may be said to mean God-conscious, God-realized or God-man. The word *Hamd* means praise, *Hamid*, praiseworthy, and *Mohammad*, praiseful.

Hur in Arabic means the beauties of the Heaven, its real meaning is the expression of heavenly beauty. *Zuhur* in Arabic means manifestation, especially that of the abstract in nature. *Ahura Mazda* is the name of God known to the Zoroastrians. This first word *Ahura* suggests *Hu*, upon which the whole name is built.

Hay in Arabic means everlasting, and *Hay-at* means life. The word *Huwal* suggests the idea of omnipresence, and *Huvva* is the origin of the name of Eve, which is symbolic of manifestation; as Adam is symbolic of life, they are named in Sanskrit, Purusha and Prakriti.

Jehovah was originally *Yahuva*, *Ya* suggesting the word *oh* and *Hu* standing for God, while the *A* represents manifestation. *Hu* is the origin of sound, but

when the sound first takes shape on the external plane, it becomes *A*, therefore *alif* or *alpha* is considered to be the first expression of *Hu*, the original word. The Sanskrit alphabet as well as that of most other languages begins with the letter.

In English, *all* suggests the meaning of the entire or absolute nature of existence. The word *Allah*, if divided into three parts may be interpreted as 'The One who comes from nothing'. *El* or *Ellah* has the same meaning as *Allah*. The words found in the Bible- *Eloi*, *Elohim* and *Hallelujah*, are related to the word *Allahu*.

The words *om*, *omen*, *amen* and *ameen*, which are spoken in all houses of prayer, are of the same origin; *A* in the commencement of the word expresses the beginning, and *M* in the midst signifies end; *N* the final letter is the re-echo of *M*, for *M* naturally ends in a nasal sound, the producing of which sound signifies life.

In the word *Ahud* which means the only Being, two meanings are involved by assonance. *A* in Sanskrit means without, and *Hudd* in Arabic means limitation.

It is from the same source that the words *Wahdat*, *Wahdaniat*, *Hadi*, *Hudda*, and *Hidayat* all come. *Wahdat* means the consciousness of self alone; *Wahdaniat* is the knowledge of self; *Hadi*, the guide; *Hudda*, to guide; *Hidayat* means guidance.

The more a Sufi listens to *Saut-e Sarmad*, the sound of the abstract, the more his consciousness becomes free from all the limitations of life. He experiences unearthly joy and rapture of *Wajad*, or ecstasy. When ecstasy overwhelms him he is neither conscious of the physical existence nor of the mental. This is the heavenly wine, to which all Sufi poets refer, which is totally unlike the momentary intoxications of this mortal plane. He is no longer dependent upon a book or a teacher, for divine wisdom. As Sharif says, 'I by the light of the soul realize that the beauty of the heavens and the grandeur of the earth are the echo of Thy magic flute'.



Embodying the celestial movements of a planet around its own axis and around the sun, the Dervish, by his whirling, realises this spiralling of the universe into being.

Motion is the significance of life, and the law of motion is rhythm. Rhythm is life disguised in motion, and in every guise it seems to attract the attention of man; from a child who is pleased with the moving of a rattle and is soothed by the swing of its cradle, to a grown person whose every game, sport and enjoyment has rhythm disguised in it in some way or another. In the intellectual recreations of man, both poetry and music, vocal or instrumental, have rhythm as their very spirit and life. There is a saying in Sanskrit that tone is the mother of nature, but that rhythm is its father. This is accounted for by the fact that the very nature of life is rhythm.

Rhythm produces an ecstasy which is inexplicable, and incomparable with any other source of intoxication.

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Rhythm produces an ecstasy which is inexplicable, and incomparable with any other source of intoxication.



This is why dance has been the most fascinating pastime of all people, both ancient and modern. The dances among many tribes in different parts of the world show a most pronounced rhythm, which proves that rhythm is not a culture, but is natural. Who cannot but be totally entranced by the rhythm of the African drums or the vivacious rhythm of the Flamenco?

In the Hindu science of music there are five different rhythms which are generally derived from the study of nature:

1. *Chatura*, the rhythm of four beats, which was invented by Devas or divine men.
2. *Tisra*, the rhythm of three beats, invented by *Rishis* or saints.
3. *Khanda*, the rhythm of five beats, invented by the *Rakshasas*.

4. *Misra*, the rhythm of seven beats, invented by the people.

5. *Sankrian*, the rhythm of nine beats, invented by the commercial class.

Mahadeva, the Lord of the Yogis, was the dancer of the *Tandava Nrutya* and his consort Parvati danced the *Lasya Nrutya*.

The traditions of the Hindus have as a most sacred record, the mystical legend of Shri Krishna dancing with the Gopis. The story relates how Krishna was moving among the dwellings of the cowherds, and every maiden attracted by his beauty and charm asked him to dance with her. He promised every maiden who asked him that he would dance with her on the night of the full moon. On the night of the full moon there assembled sixteen hundred Gopis and the miracle of Krishna was performed when he appeared as a separate Krishna to each Gopi and all of them danced with him, at the same time.

In the tradition of the Sufis, *Raqs*, the sacred dance of spiritual ecstasy which even now is prevalent among the Sufis of the East, is traced to the time when Jelal-ud-Din Rumi became entirely absorbed in the whole and single immanence of nature, and took a rhythmic turn which caused the skirt of his garment to form a circle, and the movements of his hands and neck made a circle; and it is the memory of this moment of vision which is celebrated in the dance of the dervishes. Among beasts and birds, joy is always expressed in dance; a bird like the peacock, when conscious of his beauty and of the beauty of the forest around him, expresses his joy in dance. Dance arouses passion and emotion in all living creatures.

Sufis, in order to awaken in man that part of his emotional nature which is generally asleep, have a rhythmic practice which sets the whole mechanism of

Cycles of rhythm, with major and minor cycles interpenetrating, uphold the whole of creation in their swing. This demonstrates the origin of manifestation: that motion has sprung from the motionless life, and that every motion must necessarily result in a dual aspect.



Rhythm plays a most important part not only in the body, but also in the mind; the change from joy to sorrow and the rising and fall of thoughts.

body and mind in rhythm. There exists in all people, either consciously or unconsciously, a tendency towards rhythm. Among European nations the expression of pleasure is shown by the clapping of the hands used in folk dances. Tap dancing and Rock music are very rhythm oriented.

All labour and toil, however hard and difficult, is made easy by the power of rhythm in some way or other. This idea opens to the thinker a means for a still deeper study of life.

Rhythm in every guise, be it called game, play, amusement, poetry, music or dance, is the very nature of man's whole constitution. When the entire mechanism of his body is working in

rhythm, the beat of the pulse, of the heart, of the head, the circulation of blood, hunger and thirst, all show rhythm, and it is the breaking of rhythm that is called disease.

Therefore physicians depend more upon the examination of the pulse than on anything else in discovering the true nature of disease, together with the examination of the beat of the heart and the movement of the lungs in the chest and back.

Rhythm plays a most important part not only in the body, but also in the mind; the change from joy to sorrow, the rising and fall of thoughts, and the whole working of the mind show rhythm, and all confusion and despair seem to be accounted for by the lack of rhythm in the mind.

The words 'thoughtful' and 'thoughtless' signify a rhythmic or unrhythmic state of the mind; and balance, which is the only upholding power in life, is kept up by rhythm. *Prana*, the breath, which keeps mind and body connected and which links the mind and soul, consists in keeping rhythm every moment when awake or asleep; inhaling and exhaling may be likened to the



The mechanism of every kind of machinery that works by itself is arranged and kept going by the law of rhythm. Indeed, the whole mechanism of the universe is based on the law of rhythm.

moving and swinging of the pendulum of a clock. As all strength and energy is maintained by breath, and as breath is the sign of life, and its nature is to flow alternately on the right and left side, all this proves rhythm to be of the greatest significance in life.

There is a psychological conception of rhythms used in poetry or music which may be explained thus: every rhythm has a certain effect, not only upon the physical and mental bodies of the poet, on him for whom the poetry is written, on the musician, or on him to whom the song is sung, but even upon their life's affairs.

The mechanism of every kind of machinery that works by itself is arranged and kept going by the law of rhythm. Indeed, the whole mechanism of the universe is based on the law of rhythm.

A keen observation shows that the whole universe is a single mechanism working by the law of rhythm; the rise and fall of waves, the ebb and flow of the tide, the waxing and waning of moon, sunrise and sunset, change of the seasons, the moving of the earth and of the planets, the whole cosmic system and the constitution of the entire universe are working under the law of rhythm. Cycles of rhythm, with major and minor cycles interpenetrating, uphold the whole of creation in their swing. This demonstrates the origin of manifestation: that motion has sprung from the motionless life, and that every motion must necessarily result in a dual aspect.

Illustrations: The Mystic Spiral by Jill Purce.



The murmur of water, the whistle of the wind, the hiss of the flames, the rumble of the earth and also the thunder of the sky formed the rudiments of sound, from which speech, no less than music developed. The evolution of music therefore, if not prior to the existence of all living beings in the world, must have co-existed with the evolution of mankind and developed with the growth of humanity and fulfilled the physical and metaphysical needs of all people, irrespective of their caste and creed. Music is the universal language of souls of all times and places.

THE SOUND MANIFEST

*The great Sufi mystic, Hazrat Inayat Khan, says of sound:
"...and when a mystic speaks of self-knowledge, this does not
mean knowing how old one is, or how good one is or how bad,
or how right or how wrong: it means knowing the other part of
one's being, that deeper, subtler aspect. It is upon the knowledge
of that being that the fulfilment of life
depends."*

AKHILA GHOSH

One might ask, "How can one get closer to it?" The way that has been found, by those who searched after truth, those who sought after God, those who wished to analyse themselves, those who wished to sympathise with life, is one single way: and that is the way of vibrations. It is the same way of old: they have prepared themselves with the help of sound. They made these physical atoms which had gradually become deadened, live again by the help of sound: they have worked with the power of sound. As Zeb-un-Nissa says, "Say continually that sacred name which will make

thee sacred. The Hindus have called it, *Mantra Yoga*, the Sufis have termed it *Wazifa*. It is the power of the word which works upon each atom of the body, making it sonorous, making it a medium of communication between the external life and inner life."

The philosophy of sound is linked to creational theories. The unmanifest Energy is said to manifest itself through stages; as all aspects of creation, as that which you experience through time and life, through your mind, emotions and senses.

The process of manifestation is said to proceed from the subtlest aspect of

"no form", through grosser and denser stages, to achieve form. This form may be visual, like lightning, may be only a beautiful smell, may be only sound, like thunder, or it may have body, like water and rain and plant. But whatever it is, the abstract energy will first manifest itself as sound, being the subtlest form and then proceed to condense into its grosser form. In this sense of the word, you were first a sound, a type of sound not audible to normal human ears before you were a baby!

So sound is a unit of energy. It is also a potential unit of further creation. Different units or syllables of sound are different units of energy with various capacities, and may be translated into colour and shape. Combinations of sound units, are therefore, different potencies of creation, and will invoke, according to their structure, differing vibrations, ambience, energies, and capacities within oneself.

Vowels and consonants. Spaces and walls. Spaces of different kinds. Walls of different materials. In the Sanskrit arrangement of alphabet or sound, there are the several *Vargas*-categories-*Ka Varga*, *Sa Varga*, - being categories or types of energies, or energy condensations. Consonants-combined with vowels, they give us words. Now words, as we know, always have "meaning". However, a word, in *Mantra*, is a valid unit of sound, representing the energies of creation. The great and common word, OM is to be understood this way.

So *shabda* (word) can be without *artha* (meaning). But in *mantra*, as distinct from ordinary language, the combination of sound is always the basis. The "meaning" engages the mind; without that engagement, if the mind could only engage with sound, the purpose is still achieved. The sound vibrations are vitality, an interior faculty; the "meaning" depends on external being and engages an exterior faculty, the mind.

Om Namah Shivaya: Salutations to Shiva. This *mantra* has meaning and syntax: we can analyse it in terms of object and action and the relationship of one to the other. When we recognise a word and sentence according to a sort



of social agreement, we understand something as man, woman, table, plant—then a word acquires meaning. And then it extends to relational values: "She said to him—". A sentence acquires meaning. But the sound of the word has energy value. And *mantra* is concerned more essentially with this energy for its purpose than with meaning.

So is music. *Alap* is that element in music concerned with the elaboration of the melodic line, the *Raga*. In *alap*, we are not concerned with words which have *artha*, that which is meaningful with respect to the external, material and social. In *alap*, only vowels, like *akaar*, are used by some; vowel-consonant combinations - syllables - like *NOM*, *TOM*, *RAM* are used by musicians in *Dhrupad*; syllables denoting names of the scale - *Sa, Re, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni* - are also used in the elaboration of the *Raga*.

Everything uttered, every action, has a time measure. Everything manifest exists in time, not outside it. So every syllable uttered in *mantra* and every note prolonged and elongated in music has some time measure and the combination of measures create *laya*, flow, tempo, emphasis; rhythm, units of rhythmic movement, *chhand*; and metre and *tala*, time cycles where numbers of syllables are also recognisable and countable. So the time measure of a note in music or a syllable in *mantra* is part of the structure of the sound unit and not outside it.

Sound exists inaudibly also, as thought, as a first impression on the mind, as a vibration that moves through the mind and breath and hands before it takes articulate form as audible sound. If the mind is refined and concentrated enough, the power of sound may take effect at the silent contemplative level also.

The words of the lyrics sung in *raga* are a different level of communication. In the *Khayal* form, everything is taken together, words, *raga* elaboration, rhythm and metre and the play of pure vowel and consonant. In the *Dhrupad* style, the elements are taken and presented separately, stage by stage, till the words with meaning are presented

in the *lyrical composition*. In this also, presented sentence by sentence, or at times in entirety, the lyric pleases the need for meaning; then, in *layakarithe* syllables of the words are separated and offset to the syllables of the beats of the *tala* and each syllable of sound that comprises the sentence shines alone, as it is, thrown up in the play of tone and note and time and beat, till it loses its 'meaning' to acquire the meaning of energy and vibration.

However, it is not necessary that every combination of sound, however potent, becomes a *mantra*. Certainly every lyric that is sung as a composition in Indian classical music is not a *mantra*. What is this unique combination then? A *mantra* is supposed to represent a deity. A deity is not a person or a super-person. It is a unique configuration of energies forming a unit that stands between the individual human and the cosmic energy as a conduit, giving the power of the larger to the smaller, drawing in the inhibiting isolation of the individual towards the freedom of the universal.

So a *mantra* is not representing a deity that may be drawn like a human figure, but is that unique combination of energy that, as Inayat Khan says, connects the external and internal life.

In the olden days, a *raga* was also conceived of as a deity; it was a unique configuration of sounds, combination of notes and tones, that formed a framework for surrender. Therefore, every combination of notes was not a *raga*, which only the pure intuition of an adept can recognise. A *raga* was not sung! through the motion of singing, the energy in that sound was invoked, drawn into oneself, out of oneself in a motion that opened up and connected the human and the divine, the limited and the cosmic, the inner energies with the audible outer energies that spread through the mind, emotion and sense, and through the air was heard by another and re-heard by oneself.

How did this opening up and connection take place? What did the sound configurations of *mantra* and *raga* do? How did they act, through what? When vibrations of such carefully constructed sound figures pass through one's body,

as breath or as sound, or the consciousness, they activate into patterns, they stimulate deeply and harmoniously, the nerve centres and psychic forces, the vitality and intellect, exposing the spiritual capacity.

This is the aim of *sadhana*—the practice of self-culture that leads to fulfilment. When a priest or a musician 'performs' his sound capacities for others, through chanting or music, he is himself affected, and also those who listen.

The potencies of sound and the beauty of its harmony, its psychological effect and its spiritual benefit, explored and laid out in the *Vedas* and the principles of the *Mantra Shastra* manifested themselves in the form of language, incantation and music. Study of any of the three branches should, at its root, lead us to the same revelation: sound as the subtlest aspect of creation, and a study of its formulations and patterns must reveal, experientially, the law and structure of creation.

Many forms of music arose in ancient times. Some died, some remained, some evolved, and some forms became veiled and resulted in forms with somewhat inconsistent structures and confused objectives. In small and often isolated enclaves, the authentic was patiently nurtured and furthered through personal practice and study. Meanwhile, the patronage of music passed on from religion to royalty to the 'public'; this was echoed by a corresponding movement in context and purpose, from the elevation of ritual and spiritual interaction to the aesthetic and entertaining, from *sadhana* to emotional expression and the pursuit of fame and family proprietorship.

Where does music belong? ●

Akhila Ghosh has had a long and intimate involvement with both Western and Indian Classical Music for the last twenty five years. Her special interest is in the field of 'Mantra' and its 'Sadhana'. She lives in Delhi.

THE SACRED CHANT

AKHILA GHOSH

On its journey from its silent potency to the beauty of music, sound found expression in yet another phenomenon of human aspiration - chanting.

"The traditional way that people have always had of keeping in tune with themselves is by physically resonating with it. Our instrument to do that is the voice. If you make a sound with your voice, you make enormous physical movements with your body. There is an incredible vibratory movement set into motion by the voice. One of the functions of chanting is also to sustain the body - we talk about being sound in mind and body. To be sound is to be healthy. To be sound is also to be true. When traditional societies chant together, first and foremost it is like sonorous yoga, to resonate the body so that it is healthy and to resonate with your-

self and with those closest to you".

In chanting, unlike in music, sound moves only along a restricted few frequencies. This movement, unlike in normal speech, brings form and structure of tone, and avoids the possible mechanical utterance of *mantra*. It also avoids the elaborate and endless variety of aesthetic form and emotion and ideation of classical music.

And so in chanting the voice is drawn out only in that small gamut of emotion necessary to approach the divine in faith and sublimity. The purpose of chanting has not been secular: its purpose is to beseech grace, to soothe, to heal, to turn all the negative vibrations around and within us to positive and to gather together the fragmentation of the mind. Regular chanting,

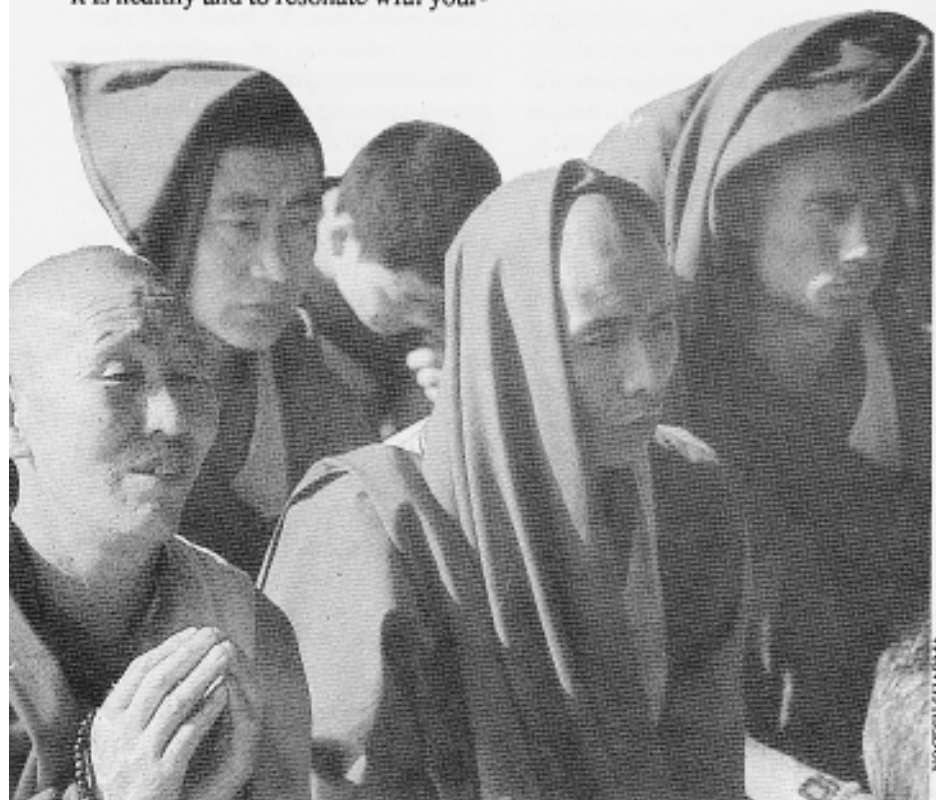
with its sonorous, gentle cadence, born of monotony and concentration on a single sight is not only known to still the heart and quieten it, but uplift and elevate it.

Classical music, whether performed by *one* composer, *one* conductor or *one* artiste tends to be an individual effort. This is largely due to the improvisation that classical music demands. Folk music is a community activity. At the level of the spirit, chanting is a miraculous community activity; and those whom formal music by-passes are touched by and drawn in to chanting.

"In church for example you might sit in the family pew and literally come into resonance with your family and all the people that are in the church. Many churches are situated on very ancient, sacred places where there is a kind of mediation between heaven and earth. People came to chant in such sacred places long before the churches were there, at the great festivals in the cyclical rhythm of the year. So, throughout the year there are special moments just as there are special times of the day.

The Angelus sounds out each day at twelve o' clock. All over the Christian world, at certain times of the day,

"...When traditional societies chant together, first and foremost it is like sonorous yoga, to resonate the body so that it is healthy and to resonate with yourself and with those closest to you".





week, month, year, for something like seven to nine hundred years, people chanted the same chants, the same liturgies, the same words, the same melodies and the whole network was lit up. Everybody came into harmony at these moments".

Both power and joy act as milestones to peace, the final goal of chanting. Ecstasy, or anything that is a medium of ecstasy, becomes a means of powerful experience, an accumulation of which leads to the goal: in the whirl

of the Dervishes, ecstasy is the essence mainly achieved through the accompanying chant.

The power of chanting is well-known and well developed in all ancient cultures. In India, the hymns of the Rig Veda, with their intense poetic nature, presented themselves as ideal material for chanting. Its rules are formulated, codified and elaborated in the Sama Veda, in which lies the origins of Indian classical music.

Ritual chanting is continued to

this day in places of prayer and meditation, often daily; or at times of great worship and festivity. The air is luminous with the vibrant chant of several people in unison with themselves, each other and the universal.

"Unfortunately, in the last several years we have lost our voice and we have become a society of sound polluters. The two are very related. It is the modern industrialised societies that are very noisy - not the traditional societies where they still use their voices. What has happened is that we have professionalised other people to use their voice for us. Now what people are trying to do is to have those : 'professionals' which they have separated out, brought back into their own body in the best way possible by putting their sound into earphones, putting their earphones on their own bodies and blasting themselves with other people's sound."

The world might become safer and more peaceful through chant. ●

With excerpts from The Power of Sound by Jill Purce.

Courtesy: Global Link up

Our main program is to commence an Afforestation project, in the region adjacent to Kadumane Village in Sakleshpur Taluk. This is in keeping with the major objective of contributing towards the welfare and upliftment of the disadvantaged rural community, through an integrated development program, of which afforestation is a major component. The other objectives are the utilization of wasteland and human resources for natural resource generation, in the form of food, fodder, fuel, fertilizer, etc., and valuable non-wood forest produce.

We need the active participation of concerned people from all walks of life. They should commit themselves to environmental causes. There are three main projects of SAVE;

1. Kadumane Main Project (MOOLADHARA) in Sakleshpur,
2. "CITY FOREST" Programme for Bangalore, and
3. 1 million seedlings generation programme for Bangalore.

To seek the involvement of people we have planned a series of awareness programs, including Earth day concerts, vigils, exhibitions etc.



SAVE

For membership details, write to:

The Chief Coordinator,
136, I Cross, Residency Road,
Bangalore-560025
Tel. 584679

"He who is jubilant needs not words-it is a kind of wordless joy.... In this exultation he bursts out in pure sound - sounds without meaning or coherent words. He rejoices with the voice itself, in his supreme joy he is unable to explain with words what he is enjoying".

With these poetic words, St. Augustin (354-430) described, in an almost ecstatic manner, the *Jubilationes* a musical form of early medieval Christianity. *Jubilationes* consisted of free vocal variations of a melody based exclusively on the syllables of the word *Hallelujah* in which a single syllable was often extended to cover a lengthy series of vocalised notes. It was precisely this freedom of vocalisation which gave way to virtuosity, that induced the Roman Church, especially Pope Gregorius I (540-604 AD) to reform and codify liturgic music. With the establishment of the two music schools in Rome, (*Schola e Cantorum*), the collection of the most apt chants, and the composition of new ones, Gregorius, later called "Gregorius The Great" created a set of rules and compositions. This was done with the intention of standardising and rendering unchangeable in time, a form of chanting, which two centuries later was to be called *Gregorian Chants*. His work was compiled in *Antiphonarius Centus* which was tied by a heavy gold chain to the Lateran altar,

THE STORY OF THE GREGORIAN CHANTS

PAOLO QUIRCIO

Chanting has always been a part of every spiritual tradition. The occident and the orient both discovered the great ecstasy enshrined in the simplicity of chanting - indeed irrespective of geographical location, the aspiration of the human being has always been the same. Here the author traces the evolution of what has come to be known today as the Gregorian Chants.



PLAIN SONG -- An important musical manuscript and fine example of Gothic illumination. French, late XIVth century. A musical text of the greatest rarity and importance in the history of Gregorian music. Listening to a choir of monks in a medieval church, intoning the same notes of centuries ago is an unforgettable experience.

from where it was stolen in one of the many plunderings to which Rome was subjected. But other copies of the same existed and gave rise, it is said, to important schools in France, Switzerland and England.

The Gregorian reforms addressed essentially, ecclesiastical chanting. Initially it was not meant for musical expression but rather as a way of praying together. The first Christian communities, often clandestine, adopted this manner to join together and perhaps remember better the formula of prayer. This initial stage, called *Accentus* or *Syllabic Chanting* consisted mainly of the recitation of a prayer, with one syllable per note, almost always a long monotonic recitation (*Psalmody*) with a concluding cadence. If the verses were chanted by a priest or a soloist alternately with the congregation or choir, it was called the *Responsorial*, an ancient cantillation of Jewish origin. It was called *Antiphonal* if the alternate verses were sung either by two different choirs or by the congregation divisions joining together in a response or refrain.

Alongside these solemn and rather severe forms of prayer, the influence of true and proper chants was coming in from Syria and Asia Minor, not based any more only on sacred scriptures; but on texts composed for the purpose. The melody is no more monophonic, the verses joined by rhyme-the rhythm no more symmetrical like that of classical poetry, but more irregular like that of free prose based on the distribution of

Liturgic music did not have particularly artistic ambitions, rather it was required to be simple for the easy comprehension of amateur devotees. It was born from the word, and chanted more than sung.

accents on the verse. These were the *Hymns*

The *Hallelujah Jubilationes* spoken about by St. Augustin, were born from these *Hymns* - true vocal forms without words, in which religious fervour was not expressed through the reciting or singing of words, but, by pure sound - expression of the soul exultant in faith. Gradually, the church was emerging out of its clandestine existence and was beginning to exist as a centralised structure of power. The whole of the ex-Roman empire was by now in a state of ruin and the now powerful church needed to unify the various forms of worship. And it was at this time that the Gregorian reforms were introduced.

As for the *Hymns* and *Jubilationes*, they certainly did not cease to exist but became progressively, the forte of specialised singers. The centralised power of the church kept afar the masses from direct practices of worship. This gave rise to what came to be defined as the second part of the Gregorian Chants. This was the work of Monk Nokter of the Abbey of St. Galle in Switzerland. Noticing the difficulty in memorising the complex and long melodies of the *Allelujas* he thought of filling in the free vocalised notes with actual syllables, to be sung simultaneously with the *Allelujas*. This gave birth to the *Sequence* which left its mark on all music - religious and profane for a few centuries, till the advent of polyphonic music with Pierluigi of Palestrina.

From the technical viewpoint, the Gregorian Chants were of simple structure. Born as liturgic music it did not have particularly artistic ambitions,



L'ispirazione di san Gregorio: miniatura della scuola di Treviri (983).

rather it was required to be simple for the easy comprehension of amateur devotees. It was born from the word, and chanted more than sung. It rejected all instrumental accompaniment which would bring it too close to profane music of pagan origin. It was centuries later that the first organ music accompanied devotees in their worship. Women's voices were not included either.

The melodic structure of the Gregorian Chants were founded on Greek modes. It is a series of 4 notes (tetrachords) generally descending. The intervals between the first and the fourth note is fixed for all the modes but the internal intervals change, donning on every single mode a different ethos and character. The Gregorian modes combine two Greek ascending chords in various ways, creating a major octave-still in use in Occidental music.

Since semitones are not used, according to the position in the pentagram of the 1st note of the mode, the internal intervals of the octave change, thus altering the 'ethos' of the mode itself.

There is no rigid structure which concludes each phrase. Each seems to open the way to the consecutive phrase, creating a musical perspective pointing to the infinite. Even the rhythmic structure reflects this lack of logic. The sequence of the notes are bound to the uttered word without division of bars, and their length is determined by the syllable to which it refers. This liberty and simplicity, free of rigid schemes, be

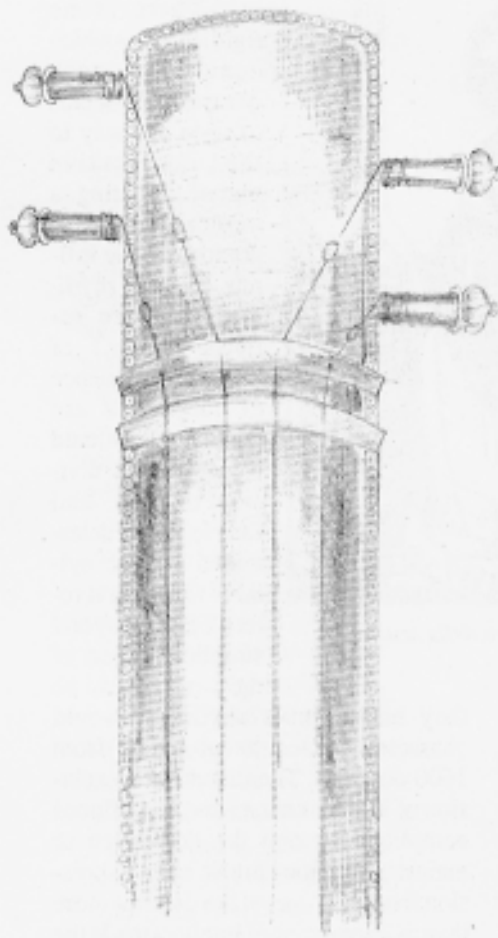
they harmonic or rhythmic, would characterise Occidental music from 1600 onwards. The determined exclusion of intellectualism and superfluous complications and the dedication to maintain religious music as an expression from the heart of the devotee more than as an exercise of intellect made the Gregorian Chants one of the highest musical expressions of all times. Even in our prosaic and noisy world of today, where faith and simplicity of sentiment is no more in vogue, finding oneself in a medieval church, listening to a choir of monks intoning the same notes of many centuries ago is an unforgettable experience.

Paolo Quircio works for the Italian airline company, Alitalia. He is a lover of music, particularly ancient and indigenous music. He lives in Rome.

CELESTIAL STRINGS

THE TANPURA

RAGHAVA. R. MENON



In the practice of music in Indian culture there is one term known as *sadhana*. This is indeed a strange word. There is nothing quite like it in the English language. It is not practice, the mechanical repetition of scales, for instance, until the voice or the fingers become light and nimble. It is much more than practice because it includes the time when the student is not practicing. *Sadhana* calls to the mind in a very special way. It demands a mind to ponder unremittingly on the nuances and multiple meanings of *swara* and *raga* and the magic lattices of relationships it reveals. This is an

essential condition of *sadhana*. Let us examine the difference between the note and the *swara*. A note is an external thing. You can produce a note by striking two metal objects together or by plucking a string, or gently pulling a tuft of horse hair across it, or blowing through a pipe with stops or striking a stretched skin or parchment on a ceramic surface with a padded stick or in any one of a hundred mechanical ways. A note is only a part on a certain range of frequencies of a calibrated musical scale. All you need is a frequency with certain limits and you have a note of one kind or another. A *swara*, however, is part of living human utterance. The whole practice of Indian music lies firstly in the creation of *swara* from notes so that *ragas* may become what they were intended to be. The word is from Sanskrit. If we tried to break down the word into root words of which it is constructed, we shall have "swa" meaning the self and "ra" meaning to bestow or offer. The important fact is that, to the seeker the making of *swara* in music is acquiring the ability to give the essence of himself in his notes. Without this the notes are merely sweet sounds. As the search goes on, and the idea of *swara* is kept firmly as a goal, its understanding also increases as a felt experience. Most musicians, practise mercilessly and often the number of hours they spend in practice is the measure by which they assess their effort. But all too often this remains only physical exercise and rarely, if ever, transforms into *sadhana*. For musical *sadhana*, the mind must apprehend *swara* and its myriad relationships in a *raga*, in intensely personal and subjective ways, so that their nature is deeply felt and emotionally assimilated. People talk so much about what they know about music that they have no space to feel anything. Such people can only practise and are rarely able to lose themselves enough to achieve *sadhana*.

Intense, almost ecstatic enjoyment of a *swara* is a crucial characteristic of the person to whom *sadhana* is

possible. If practice and knowledge were all that were needed to make a Ghulam Ali Khan, a Kumar Gandharva or a Chembai, we would easily have a thousand of them each generation. So much hard work and knowledge can be found in the music schools in India that this should be well within the bounds of possibility. But this does not happen as well-known *gharanas* prove time and again. There is no doubt-taking the sheer number of those who acquire them—that knowledge of music and practice are more easily achieved than *sadhana*. For *sadhana* is none of these things. Passion for music is not enough. It is necessary to have a reasoned understanding of the psychophysical apparatus in the man that makes music and the ability to keep the vital ingredients of the essence of man when flashes of this appear in the music of others and in himself as he learns and ponders on the mystery of his art. This has very little to do with the actual fact of hard work, because this is the result of understanding. If this understanding exists it is possible to work for the right things in music and follow this vision like a leopard after its kill. Then perhaps *sadhana* will result. You cannot shortchange this effort and get the genuine thing, in Indian music.

Before we can grasp the true nature of *sadhana* it is important to examine a very vital aid and support towards achieving the kind of effort we call by that name. This is the *tanpura*. Incredible as it may seem to someone who has never had to face up with the issue of musical awakening it is the *tanpura* that plays a pivotal role in the arduous journey of musical *sadhana*. It is this instrument that helps a student through the crisis of learning. The student who receives an inkling of *sadhana* learns to lose himself in the sound of the *tanpura* and to treat it as the symbol of life's profoundest mysteries. It can be made to become a source of emotional nourishment and support in the task of concentration on the depth and significance of *swara* and *raga*, offering him valuable hints about the human mind

and its immense potentialities of sublimity and musical creativity.

We have then to examine the true place of this instrument in our music in order to understand the meaning of *raga*. Without this instrument your effort is like setting out on a journey across a desert without an adequate supply of drinking water or trying to cross the Atlantic without a boat. To a musically sensitive person this is not too difficult to understand. Try to get someone to tune a *tanpura* very carefully for you if you cannot do it yourself. Listen to its sound for several minutes placing the stem of the instrument against your ears. Observe the sound and try to feel it in your mind if you can. Observe the sound's texture, its echoes and resonance, its swirl and formlessness. Note that once the sound begins it has no longer any beginning or an end. It has no parts. Any point of its sound is its beginning, its middle and its end. Indeed it is not difficult to notice that the sound is in a state of continuous coming and going. Remember that a practising student will have this sound close to his ears for many hours each day. After some time of practice it is not difficult to imagine that you are able to shut out everything else around you, shut out even your thoughts.

Imagine as you find your place with this instrument, the notes of the scale gaining in meaning by the quality you are able to invest them of sweetness and beauty and light by mingling and joining with the *tanpura* in thrilling union. And when bad days come in your practice, as surely they will, when everything seems muddy and opaque and your spirit is inert and shut off, you can make the drone of the *tanpura* swirling in your ears take the tension of your mind and comfort your inquiet spirit. Long sessions with your *tanpura* every day will not make the possibility of a mystic connection with this instrument totally incomprehensible. Understanding the purpose and function of this instrument is fundamental to the learning of music.

It is said some years ago someone went up to the late Faiyaz Khan and asked him, "Is the *tanpura* a musical instrument?" It must have been difficult to answer this question with a mere 'yes'. For the *tanpura* is much more than a musical instrument. When Faiyaz Khan used to sing he used four *tanpuras* and Gulam Ali Khan did the same and although among younger singers Kumar Gandharva used only two there is no doubt that he filled the hall with their

sound as though there were a battery of them around him. Yet it is a self-effacing instrument, shy and awkward in front, quietly disappearing into the back-drop but despite its unassuming nature, despite all the activity that is going on in front of it, it is indubitably there and by no means mitigated.

It is amongst the oldest instruments of the Indian classical tradition and plays a pivotal role in the making of a musician. One or other variation of this instrument has been a part of our tradition as long as any records exist. Merely to tune it well and get the best out of it, requires an aural sophistication and acuity (sharpness) which very few acquire in a lifetime and an ability to tune it to perfection is a sure sign of a musical sensibility of a high order. There is more to it than the skill to approximate the vibration of its strings to a particular frequency. Like the way you stand or the carriage of your head and shoulders, a *tanpura* has a curious personal flavour to its tuning which changes when someone else tunes it and the same person subtracts and adds elements to it every time he returns to tune it.

Any musician knows that he has to begin feeling a *raga* deeply enough before he can sing it and it is not his

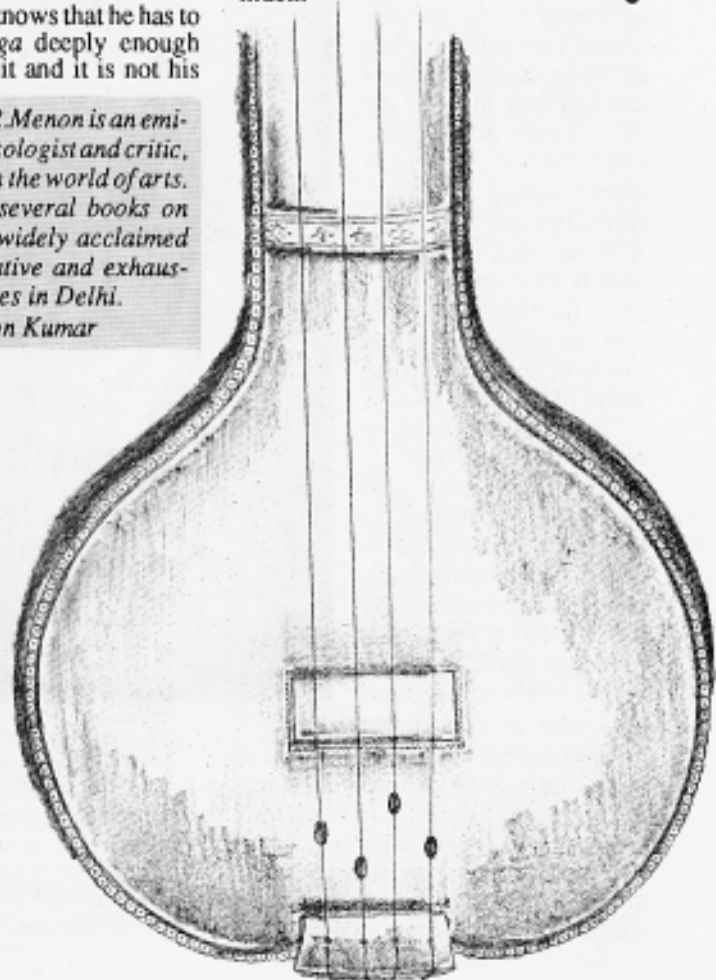
Dr Raghava R Menon is an eminent scholar, musicologist and critic, deeply respected in the world of arts. He has authored several books on music, which are widely acclaimed as being authoritative and exhaustive. Dr Menon lives in Delhi.

Illustrations: Oroon Kumar

singing that makes him feel. It is this instrument that makes him ready to feel, provides him with the stuff of tenderness and grief and ecstasy of which *ragas* are made. In the sound of the *tanpura* lie dormant all the *ragas* of Indian music yet unborn, but waiting to be released from the confining prison of gourd and wood and metal strings.

Tune a *tanpura* at dusk when the shadows lengthen sadly outside your windows, the *godhuli* of Sanskrit literature, and it will call out at you to sing *Yaman Kalyan* or *Sree*. Its sound as it swirls around you in eddies, wraps around you like gauze and sings with siren voices, the *raga* for which you unconsciously tuned it.

You will also realise quite early in your practice that the *tanpura* has another function. It is the only means you have of forgetfulness; like the waters of Lethe, its sound forgives your past, erases your loneliness and restores you to your essence so that you may sing from the very core of your being. Once its sound has inveigled itself into your consciousness nothing seems to matter much.



THE MYSTERY OF AN INDIAN RAGA

PRAKASH WADEHRA

On the highway of life one often has a chance meeting with an uncommon person who speaks only when addressed to and no more than is necessary, whose speech is wisdom and grace, who gives of himself as much as the other can fathom, sending signals all the time of a deep sea of wisdom which reveals its treasures in proportion to how deep one plunges into it, who is as lissome and comely in outer form and as richly fragrant from within. One always wishes to hear him longer, be in his presence a while longer. A similar aura surrounds the mystic musical entity we call the 'raga.'

"Touch me but gently" it declares, "I am air, I am an invisible will-o'-the-wisp, I am insubstantial, a mere whiff of perfume. I can only be sensed by my peculiar aroma. I am pervasive like all things, ethereal and airy and can soar high on the elfin wings of imagination" Such is the *raga*, a dainty nothing to be perceived by superfine senses. It is an idea in abstract sounds, mesmeric in its impact. Its elusive incantation can rob all sense and transport one to a will-less world of ineffable beauty.

The *raga* is a sequence of sound-shades brought together in accordance with the highest principles of symmetry, concord and aesthetics. To please the ear, is its irreducible essential. By implication, a *raga* must have taste and flavour. And yet any and every sequence of sounds or *swaras* that delights the ear is not *raga*. *Swaras* or notes that may be defined as the only music-worthy aspect out of a vast multitude of sounds which are culled with care and arranged in a musical sequence makes a *raga*. A music-worthy sound or *nada* differs from noise in as



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much as it has regulated vibrations.

A *raga* must fulfil certain minimum requirements. It must take a minimum of five notes of the octave including the fundamental tonic note. Together, the 4th and 5th notes of the octave i.e. the *Madhyama* and *Pancham* cannot be simultaneously absent from any *raga*. It has to belong to or be reducible to one or the other generic scales in existence. A *raga* has to be distinct from all other existing *ragas*. It must depict an emotion and therefore be rendered at a particular time favouring that emotion. (especially in Hindustani Music). The sharp and flat forms of the same note cannot usually be juxtaposed alongside each other in any *raga*. It has also to have a well-defined mode of ascent and descent. Not all the notes employed in any *raga* are of equal importance.

At least two of these, lying at a distance of 4 or 5 notes from each other occupy a place of pre-eminence in the *raga*. Called the *vadi* and *samvadi* i.e. the most sonant or assertive notes and a little less so respectively, these are sometimes likened to a king and his prime

minister. Their location on the octave often governs the mood, movement, the psyche and the time of rendering of a raga.

It may be observed that Indian ragas use more than the 12 notes (7 sharp and 5 flat) of the Western diatonic scale. There are at least 10 additional and finer intervals in use, perceptible only to a sensitive ear. The existence of these subtler total intervals can be palpably felt in the use of, for instance one and the same *komal gandhar* in ragas like *Darbari Kanhra*, *Malhar*, *Bahar*, *Bageshwari*, *Bhimplasi*, *Adana*, *Jai Jai Vanti* and the like. These can best be felt in the gentle pulsations or the wistful slow reach of a stringed note on the Veena or Sitar. There can be as many ragas as the mathematical permutations of the 12 notes of the octave. However a great many of them have only an academic interest and do not fulfil the test of ingratiating the ear (termed in the Sanskrit treatises as *Ranjakta*.)

Leaving out the unmusical combinations derived from the possible permutations of 12 notes, we are left with nearly 400 ragas of which about 200 are in vogue. Just as sometimes we tend to associate a mood with various colours, yellow, red, green etc. declaring some as cool, others hot, the various musical tones, severally flavour and express certain moods. In the same way, Indian philosophy attaches a mood to each phase of the day and night as also to the various seasons- the smiling spring, the pouring rains, the bald autumn and the like. And hence a time for each raga. Similarly there are special ragas conforming to the spirit of each season. Thus, for an Indian musician, the raga is a throbbing, living entity that breathes, feels and exudes a distinct aroma and colour.

The mystique of a raga, swathed as it is with the intuitive perceptions of an interpreter, can just not be reduced to or imprisoned in any system of notation though a few are in vogue to render such assistance as they can. A musician is free to improvise within the framework of a well-defined code for each raga. The unwritten and free improvisations call for ingenuity and imagination. They acquire expanse and meaning from an inspired use of pause, accent

and tone-colour. Embellishments of diverse kinds, some delineating the arching rainbow and others depicting the roar and rumble of thunder are capable of being transcribed in the medium of musical notes. Different musicians have picked up different ornamentations and graces of music and used them in varying proportions in the architecture of the raga. This has led to specialisation of one or the other aspect or set of embellishments by professional families of musicians leading, in turn, to the emergence of what are called the *Gharanas*.

Gharanas are like trade guilds, nurturing specific and specialised skills and fortifying them within the family. From the kind of musical usages in the rendition of a raga as also the mode of voice culture, an experienced ear can always tell the *gharana* or style of the singer. Each *gharana* acts as a storehouse of selected ragas and a set of cherished old compositions or *bardishes*.

The concept of *rasa* is unique to an Indian raga. It assigns a mood or emotion to each raga. Depending on the notes, the metre and the pace of the rhythm, a raga may express valour, romance, pathos or gaiety etc. Ideally the sentiment of the lyric or the word-composition around which a raga revolves in the case of vocal music should synchronise with that of the raga. An instance may be found in the old lyrics of some ragas of the spring such as *Basant* and *Bahar*. One in *Basant* - 'Rang rang phool khiley, ritu basant ayi' - and another in *Bahar* - 'Kaliyan sang karat rang raliyan' not only conform to the spirit of the spring but actually enhance it substantially making it concrete. The same is true of ragas of the rainy season-diverse and fascinating varieties of *Malhar* such as *Mian Ki Malhar*, *Megh*, *Gaur Malhar*, *Soor Malhar*, *Jayant Malhar*, *Ramdasi*, *Dhoolia* etc. They all sing of the cloud-navigated skies, lightning and thunder ranged against a love-lorn woman whose sweetheart has gone to *bidesh*. Certain other ragas such as, *Desh* and *Durga* too express sentiments connected with rains. Some old veterans had a novel way of adding certain notes and phrases to selected ragas when rendered during the monsoon season to

make them fall in line with its mood. They called the raga so obtained as the *sawani* of such and such raga. Once I heard a tantalising recital of such a melody by the late Pandit Onkar Nath Thakur at the N.D.M.C. Town Hall in Delhi. He christened it as 'Tilak Kamod Ki Sawani.' In the melodic scheme of the popular *Tilak Kamod* he introduced a wailing whimpering *Komal Gandhar* as he descended down to the home-note *Shadja*. The combination evoked a feeling too deep for mere words. Many in the audience were in tears. If one has ever heard a powerful rendering of *Malhar* with its love-locked twin *Nishadas* and its post provocative-usage *Ri Pa Ga*, one is tempted almost to believe the ancient legend according to which the heat generated by Tansen's rendition of raga *Deepak* singed his body and how his beloved *Tani* came to his rescue with a recital of the rain-inducing raga *Malhar*.

Just as while guiding a traveller to his destination we direct him to turn left or right from this or that point or juncture, a raga too lays down its marks of distinction: the halting points (*nyasa*) as well as a comprehensive code as to the twists and turns to be observed on the journey. Of these the *nyasa* or stop-over or emphasis on specified *swaras* is of vital importance. It is interesting to note how a shift of emphasis in a raga radically alters its form, character and ethos. An instance of this may be seen in the pairs of melodies like *Deshkar* and *Bhupali*, *Marwa*, *Puriya* and *Sohoni*, *Basant* and *Paraj* and a number of ragas of the *Kanhra* family. Evolved from exactly similar raw-material they are so different from each other in their temperament and impact. This, in a way, is a unique feature of a *Hindustani* raga, not to be found in any other musical system. To wind up our discussion of raga, it must be said that the raga is an elusive, mystical entity to sense which one has to enter its atmosphere intuitively.

Prakash Wadehra is a well known connoisseur and critic of Indian Classical Music. He writes for some of the leading newspapers and journals in India.

NATURE AND RAGA

JIWAN PANI

Anything beautiful is but a condition of music. Nature is full of beautiful things; therefore full of melodies, both heard and unheard. When the cloud-thrilled blue sky sings, rainbows appear with their seven-coloured glowing notes. Looking at the rainbow, early man was possibly inspired to conceive of seven musical notes which are called *swaras*, literally meaning, 'glistening things', since the root *swar* means, 'radiance'.

Nature has always inspired music in man. Ancient Indian musicians were surely aware of the deep relationship between nature and music. Therefore, when *raga* music evolved, many *ragas* were named after something from nature, such as *Megha* (cloud), *Vasanta* (spring) *Chandrakauns* and so on.

Raga music evolved around the 7th Century A.D.

Earlier, in place of *ragas* were *jatis*. Whether it was *raga* or *jati*, the base was the seven *swaras*. Indian musicologists felt that each of the *swaras* was inspired by the call of either a bird or an animal as shown below:

<i>Shadja</i> (Sa)	<i>Mayura</i> (peacock)
<i>Rishava</i> (Ri)	<i>Chaataka</i> (a kind of dove)
<i>Gandhara</i> (Ga)	<i>Chaaga</i> (goat)
<i>Madhyama</i> (Ma)	<i>Krouncha</i> (curlew)
<i>Panchama</i> (Pa)	<i>Kokila</i> (cuckoo)
<i>Dhaivata</i> (Dha)	<i>Durdura</i> (frog)
<i>Nishada</i> (Ni)	<i>Gaja</i> (elephant)



NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

Ragini Asavari

*Asavari is longing for her
husband and climbs the
Malaya Mountains
All the snakes desert their
sandal trees
And writhe and coil their
bodies.*

The cuckoo, an extremely mellifluous bird, had inspired not only the fifth note, but a number of *ragas* have also been named after it, such as, *Kokilabhashini*, *Kokiladhwani*, *Kokilapancham*, *Kokilarava* and so on. Nature's many moods and many pleasant situations have inspired *ragas*. After a sweltering summer when dark clouds cover the sky, portending rain, peacocks dance and so does the human heart. This earth-cooling experience has inspired *ragas* like *Megha*, *Malhar*, *Megharanjani*, *Meghambari* etc. It is not an exaggeration to say that the experience of listening to a well rendered *Malhar* is similar to that of being cooled by a shower after an afternoon of sweltering heat.

There is a lovely *raga* named *Chandini Kedar*. *Chandini* means, moonlight and *Kedar*, meadow. The name of the *raga* suggests and does evoke a vast meadow flooded with soft moonlight. Here, nature appears in a highly romantic mood and indeed a well rendered *Chandini Kedar* does inspire such a mood.

Music is the most abstract of all arts. Indian artistic traditions have always endeavoured to express abstractions in concrete terms and vice versa. Although *ragas* are highly abstract, they have a kind of musical character. The earliest attempt to give this concrete form to the *raga* was to

It is beyond the human intellect to comprehend the reasons why particular combinations of notes used in a raga appeal more at a certain period of the day or year. In fact, the conscious mind, of which intellect is a part, is like the tip of a huge iceberg-like mind that floats on the vast ocean of experience.

humanise it. From this evolved the concept of *raga* and *ragini*. Those which have a masculine character were conceived of as husbands and those with a feminine lyricism as wives. When the *raga* repertoire was limited to only forty two, six were considered as husbands, each having six wives. But, when more and more ragas came into being, they were fitted to the 6 *raga*, 36 *ragini* format as sons and daughters-in-law. This was basically a kind of arrangement for classification. When, however, *ragas* became numerous, this sort of classification proved to be too inadequate. Other systems were considered, but the endeavour to concretise the abstract character of a *raga* continued.

Thus, the *dhyana shlokas* (descriptive meditations) were born. They are short poems elucidating the musical character of a *raga* through a situation/atmosphere deeply evocative of Nature. For instance, a *dhyana shloka* of *raga Megh* portrays it as the 'son of the sky and born out of the mountains wearing a gorgeous turban and holding a sword of lightning'. These *dhyana shlokas* of *ragas* have inspired a whole series of paintings known as the *Ragamala* paintings. In these miniature paintings the poetic descriptions of *ragas* have been interpreted visually.

The *raga*-nature relationship appears quite intriguing when we look at the concept of assigning an appropriate time for rendering a *raga*. It is not strictly followed by the Carnatic school



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Ragini Todi

*Her slim body as radiant as the frost,
Is smeared with the paste of saffron
and camphor
She beguiles the deer in
the woodlands
carrying her Vina, such is Todika*

of music, but the Hindustani school adheres to it strictly. Each *raga* in the classical Hindustani repertoire has an appropriate time of the day for its rendering. Time here is not measured by the clock but is linked to Nature's clock, the sun. The magic of dawn and twilight, the restless day hours and the deep, sensuous, mysterious night are all musically portrayed. There are early morning *ragas* like, *Bhairav*, *Ahir Bhairavi*, *Lalit*. The later morning sees *ragas* such as *Asavari*, *Jaunpuri*, *Deshi* etc. Some mid-day and afternoon *ragas* are, *Shuddha Sarang*, *Brindavani Sarang*, *Patdeep*, *Multani*. The evening and night give way to *Yaman*, *Bihag*, *Chayanat*, *Puri Kalyan*. And this is followed by the deep night *ragas*, like, *Darbari* and *Shivaranjini*. These are only a few examples.

It is beyond the human intellect to comprehend the reasons why particular combinations of notes used in a *raga* appeal more at a certain period of the day or year. In fact, the conscious mind, of which intellect is a part, is like

the tip of a huge iceberg-like mind that floats on the vast ocean of experience.

What we call Nature is actually the world of manifest phenomena. Man has however sensed that there is another world which is non-manifest. Music is one of the vehicles through which one can express the presence of a reality more intense and profound than the manifest world. To classical Indian musicians, the expansion outward into space is also a journey into their own selves. Experiencing these expansions heightens our own consciousness. It is not the intellect but this heightened consciousness that understands how deeply music and Nature are related.

Jiwan Pani is a well known scholar and writer in the fields of art and philosophy. He lives in Delhi and is presently the Director of the Kathak Kendra here.

THE EYE is a forum for young people (and others not so young!) to send in articles, short stories, poems, photographs, illustrations, cartoons etc. We look forward to receiving them.

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

COLLATED BY AKHILA GHOSH

"Music lay asleep, as it were, in the womb of Nature, and its awakening means its manifestation in the gross form from the unmanifested causal one. The theory of evolution connotes the idea of gradual manifestation of that which already existed in a subtle or casual form... The art of Music also developed from the causal state into the gross form through a gradual process and it will go on developing until it reaches perfection....."

In India, music seems to have

evolved bit by bit through its several components. The note, the movement of notes in pitch, the formation of scale, and scales of different intervals; the combination of and upward and downward scale forming a whole melodic concept. The types of such scales are possible according to the several criteria of mood, structure, emphasis and pause. Then forms evolve, presenting these components of music and word compositions and the involvement of lyric with rhythm and scale. In all this, the concept of 'raga' was unique and central to Indian



INDIA, CONTINUITY IN CHANGE

"The art of Music also developed from the casual state into the gross form through a gradual process and it will go on developing until it reaches perfection..."



INDIA, CONTINUITY IN CHANGE

classical music.

The cultivation, enjoyment and appreciation of music at all levels and in different spheres of life had a vitally important role in Indian culture. The art and science of music was said to lead to both sensuous enjoyment and aesthetic delight as well as to spiritual bliss and liberation.

The origin of Indian music goes back to Vedic times—the *Sama Veda* and *Gandharva Veda*. *Sama Veda* chants began first from one single note known as *archika*, that is to say that the entire recitation was confined to one *swara* (note) only. For example, the word, *OM* was repeated on the same note. The second stage was when two notes began to be used. The higher note next to the one used in *archika* was employed in it. If we assume, for the purpose of better understanding that the note of *archika* is *sa*, then the second note will be *ri*. For example, the word *OM* was sung beginning with *ri* and coming back to *sa*—*ri-sa, ri-sa*. Next, notes were added to the *sa* till all the seven notes were present. The *Sama* scale of seven notes was a descending scale and the notes of the scale were named either according to a description of the pitches or just numerically.

After the initial scale evolved, came the structuring of it according to certain basic patterns and intervals. Then came variations on these structures and therefore, the basis for



SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI

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unending variations. The *Grama* was "a fundamental scale, the base of all scales". It was a "particular order of arrangement of *srutis* (microtones) and *swaras*, determined by consonance", a mutual consonance of notes. There were only three *gramas* and they became the basis for other evolutes, the other melodic forms, namely, *Murchana* and *Jatiraga*.

Murchana was the name given to the scale derived from the *Grama* by employing what is known as the tonic

shift, by shifting the keynote and getting another scale with another with a different internal structure and consonance among notes. A *murchana* was also a 'parent' scale with full seven notes, arranged in a regular sequence with no transilient notes. *Jati* came next and was the closest to what we now know as *raga*. A *Jati* was a particular arrangement of notes out of the seven notes and defined and displayed certain specified requirements and characteristics in singing: the ascending and descending notes, their sequence and arrangement, their consonance, the emphasis on some and not the other, the prolongation or rest-



AVINASH PASRICHA

A raga is more than sensations or a bundle of impressions. Indeed, all kinds of sounds, sweet or harsh, musical or otherwise, create some impression on their own. But why are not these sounds termed as ragas?

ing on some and not the other and the unique life-giving note was introduced. All this was the foundation of the present unique characteristic of Indian music, the *raga*.

The *raga* is the norm or the matrix of Indian music, and it forms the main structure of Indian music. It may be asked as to what the word, *raga* signifies. Narada says that the *Gramaragas* fully convey the idea and significance of the *raga* which pleases the mind of all living beings.

The *Brhaddesi* by Matanga Muni is a 7th Century text on music. Though *ragas* were evidently in use around 500-600 B.C., it is Matanga who, for the first time has given a clear definition of it: 'From his *shlokas* or definitions we come to know that the word, *raga*, has been derived from the root, "*rang*" to tinge or impress. Just as a sheet of white cloth can be tinged with some colours, similarly, the minds of men and animals get tinged, as it were, with the pleasing vibrations of sweet sounds of music. In fact, the vibrations of sweet sounds of both vocal and instrumental music create soothing and pleasing sensations in the mind, and the total material form of such sensations or impressions is said to be the *raga*. In fact, a *raga* is more than sensations or a bundle of impressions. Indeed, all kinds of sounds, sweet or harsh, musical or otherwise, create some impression on their own. But why are not these sounds termed as *ragas*? Intuitive musicologists and scientists have carefully observed and examined the aesthetic aspects of all kinds of sound and their vibrations, and have come to the conclusion that sounds of music, that is, musical tones are more delicate, charming, attractive and sweet than all other sounds. *Ragas* are possessed of some specific qualities which determine them and animate them with life and energy. We find *ragas*, therefore, help to concentrate the dispersed or scattered modifications of the mind, and thus lead listeners to the realm of meditation, which brings peace and joy'. Matanga Muni, for the first time interpreted *Jati* as *Raga*. He incorporated into the *raga*, the ten *lakshanas* or characteristics of



The most important part of music, the alap, evolved free of tala. Here, the raga is developed and elaborated slowly, note by note, phrase by phrase. The usual practice is to start with the lower pitches and very gradually work up.

the *Jatiragas*.

Along with the *raga*, the *tala* or time cycle also evolved. During the time of the *Samagana*, there was no *tala*, though there was tempo-equal measures of time. *Tala* is a time cycle consisting of a set number of beats which repeats itself. This time cycle has its own internal divisions and patterns and creates its own ethos. A composition of words, set to a particular *raga* is arranged in that time cycle or *tala*, and is known as a *prabandha* or *bandish*.

Indian music has recognised two main categories of musical forms—the ancient *anibaddha* and *nibaddha*, i.e., bound and not bound. Lyrics could also be sung free of *tala*, or set to *tala*, as we know it now. Of course, the most important part of music, the *alap*, evolved free of *tala*. Here, the *raga* is developed and elaborated slowly, note by note, phrase by phrase. The usual



practice is to start with the lower pitches and very gradually work up. A certain set of notes is taken as the base and variations of this theme are improvised, unfolding the theme of the *raga*. As a matter of fact, the *alap* is the most sensitive and fundamental part of *raga* enunciation. The most delicate aspects of melodic progressions are possible only in *alap* and good musicians have always felt that it is mainly in this section that a *raga* exhibits its correct form.

Broadly, by the 7th Century A.D., the triad of *raga-tala-prabandha* had become the quintessence of the Indian musical tradition. This triad has, all along, provided a firm bedrock for the grand, vibrating edifice of Indian classical music which holds good even today.

This does not mean, however, that Indian music is a static phenomenon and that the *Shastri* discipline has been dead weight preventing any further movement or modification. On the contrary, as a creative art, Indian music could not but be changing.

"Among the revolutionising changes occurring from time to time in the realm of Indian music, its bifurcation into two systems after the 13th Century was a major one. Flowing from the common ancient heritage and maintaining the essentially melodic character and of course, the invincible *raga-tala-prabandha* triad, the two streams—the Northern (including the western and the eastern regions of the country)

system called Hindustani music and the Southern system called Carnatic music went on developing on their own lines.

The manner of interpretation and the shift of emphasis from structural bondage to free improvisation in Hindustani music is one of the main differences between the two; these brought in their wake a host of ancillary changes in *alap* and *tala*, which ultimately resulted in two, almost separate systems of music".

In Carnatic music, on the other hand, a study of the structure of its present forms (*Kriti*, *Kirtanam*, *Varnam*, *Padam*, *Javali*) makes it fairly clear that this music is maintaining the ancient traditions of the *prabandhas* more closely and rigidly than Hindustani music. Just as in *prabandha* strict adherence to the structure of the composition is compulsory, so also in Carnatic music. Though to a lesser degree, adherence to the forms of the compositions even in improvisation in the *naraval*, or *layakari bol-upaj* according to Hindustani music, while rendering *kritis* is required.

The 15th and 16th Centuries in North India saw the acme of a style and composition called, *Dhrupad* or *Dhrupad* which seems to have developed from more ancient compositional types, *dhrupa prabandhas*. This was the time of a general revival of and exuberance in various walks of life, patronised by benign and enlightened rulers like Raja Mansingh Tomar of Gwalior and Emperor Akbar. It was the age that produced great *dhrupad* singers like Swami Haridas, Tansen, Baiju Bawra and others. The form exists to this day, carried forward by a few *dhrupad* musicians. *Dhrupad* singing always starts with an *alap* in slow, medium and fast tempos. The *prabandha* is sung next, with main emphasis on rhythmic designs and syncopations. The entire atmosphere is one of grandeur and gravity. There is a certain kind of softness in some styles, but rarely, if ever, is there an attempt to make it filigree. *Dhamar* is another variety of this type, generally similar to *dhrupad*. The literary content of



AVINASH PAREKH

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dhamar describes the play of Lord Krishna, particularly in the Festival of Colours, Holi. The *tala* is always *Dhamar* of fourteen beats.

Indian music, especially Hindustani music underwent tremendous changes. Foreign invasions and conquests became frequent and brought about their inevitable influences. Indian music, while assimilating them, never lost its strength and identity. It undoubtedly enriched itself enormously. Persian influence was the most predominant. Directly through this influence evolved the *Khayal* form. The word, *khayal* itself is not Indian and means, 'idea' or 'imagination'. In comparison to *dhrupad*, which is sombre, *khayal* is more free and flowery. A *khayal* has two parts: *sthai* and *antara*. The former has its movements generally in the lower and middle octaves, and all melodic

variations and improvisations end with the last few phrases of this section; it is for this reason that the initial part is called *sthai*, for the word means stable. In essence, it is the burden of the song and performance. The second part, *antara* is sung after the *sthai*. Its progressions are in the middle and upper octaves. The two sections are complimentary to each other and together they give a full picture of the *raga* framework. The *bada khayal* is commenced with the *sthai* in slow or medium tempo. Slowly it progresses till the *antara* is reached. Now the patterns become more intricate. At the proper time the *chota khayal* is introduced, when the music becomes faster and a climax with very quick *taans*, *sargams*, *bol taans* completes the recital. All the while the nucleus of attention is the *sam* to which the melody must return again and again.

While *Dhrupad* & *Khayal* dominated the North Indian classical music, Carnatic music flowered into several types of forms in composition and forms within forms, outside *tala* as well as lighter forms in *prabandha*. In North India also, the *Bhajan* and *Tappa*, and *Thumri* come in as lighter forms of music, based more on rhythm and word-meaning than the abstract *Raga*.

In this very brief outline we have represented the evolution of the aspects, elements and forms of Indian classical music over the centuries between the Vedic music and the present. The river will flow on; there will usually be no great waterfalls and crest waves in this river; sometimes an accumulation of change may appear great in perspective; but essentially change, evolution and transformation emerge through the individual practice of known and unknown musicians and their individual contributions imperceptibly add and make the whole an exciting and inspiring process of constant and inevitable change that marks the sign of anything living.

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M There used to be a quiz programme on British radio where a panel of contestants had to guess the title of a popular tune from a repertoire dating back over fifty years or so. As a clue they were played an introductory bar of music, or sometimes as little as the first note of the tune. At first glance it would seem an incredibly difficult task to guess the title on hearing only one note, however it never ceased to amaze me just how easy it was. Another quiz show, orientated to classical tastes, used a pianist on a silent keyboard to "play" well known classical pieces to the contestants. All they could hear was the rhythmic clacking of the keys as the pianist tapped out a sonata or concerto. Again, even for people with scant musical knowledge it was surprising how easy it was to recognise a Mozart sonata or a Rossini overture.

I have often wondered why this should be so. What is it that makes the first note of a Beatles song so memorable? Why should the timbre of Fats Waller's piano playing be so instantly recognisable? Why should we remember so many words from an insignificant pop tune which we heard a few times on the radio twenty years ago? Sadly I can only ask the questions - as far as I am aware there are no definitive answers. Where music is concerned each of us moves in realms of personal taste and experience, but it would seem that cultures all over the world have found music to be the deepest form of human expression. For me a clue to this universal appeal is to be found in Handel's words when he finished composing "The Messiah". Exhausted from days of arduous labour, he exclaimed: "I did see God himself".

Undoubtedly music has strange powers. The first bar of the popular song, the rhythmical drone of the tanpura the beat of a drum, or the earthy sound of the didgeridoo can transport each and every one of us from the mere

mundane form of existence to undiscovered realms of experience. Possibly it is the fact that language precisely fails to communicate the inner mysteries of life that music takes over where speech becomes meaningless. Perhaps we need to escape the incessant bodily rhythms of heartbeat and blood coursing in the veins, by creating soothing melody. Maybe music is an attempt to recreate the harmony which appears in the constant cycles of nature. In short,

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a holdall definition of music is beyond the scope of everyday speech, but one thing we can say with absolute certainty is that it has the power to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers. More than any other form of expression it can bind people together in harmony, and make us aware that humankind has the capacity for shared understanding. A personal anecdote here will illustrate my point.

I get a great deal of personal pleasure playing a rather strange instrument known as an Appalachian dulcimer. What particularly appeals to me about this instrument is that the melody is sustained by drones which resonate with the air all around creating a feel-

ing which defies description. As you can imagine, I am therefore a great fan of Indian music - my favourite instruments being resonant instruments like the sitar and the veena. On a visit to Bangalore a few years ago I was lucky enough to attend a concert by a veena player called Shanti Rao. The following day I wrote a description of the concert so that my emotions were recorded -

"This evening must rate as one of

the best musical experiences of my life.... the flash of eyes, hand signals and body gestures between the players heightens expectancy. The intricate weaving the melody, rhythm and tonal colour against the deep resonance of the bass strings and elevates the inner ear. A world of sound encompasses the air, layer upon layer of melodic invention swirls around and quite literally fills one's being.... an hour and a half seemed like ten minutes."

I will never know to this day what made me do it, but at the end of the concert I went up to Shanti and said that I would like her to come and play at my little village hall in the south-west of England. Much to my surprise she said

that if I could make the necessary arrangements she would be delighted to appear. To cut a long story short, a year later she came to Cornwall for the concert, but there was an added surprise in store. As luck would have it, two drummers from the Karnataka College of Percussion had been touring Europe, and before they returned to India, they agreed to accompany Shanti on her short tour of the UK. So, on the night of the concert Mr. Mani on mridangam and Mr. Shashikumar on ghatam sat each side of the veena.

I was extremely apprehensive. Having worked so hard to get an audience for the evening, I had my doubts whether they would appreciate the music. My fears were unfounded. The musicians gave a stunning performance to a packed house, they received three standing ovations, and are still talked about in the village some three years later. If ever proof was needed that music can transcend cultural frontiers this was it.

In the modern world of instant communication, where satellite links convey live information at the flick of a switch, music has become the truly international language. The honeyed sound of electric guitars fills the airwaves, and this week's latest pop tune is hummed between Los Angeles and

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Ladakh. Music has become the megaculture which crosses all boundaries whether they be linguistic, ethnic or political. However, this new culture may exact a heavy price. In the wake of last week's pop tune comes what can best be described as airport culture, that bland levelling of meaningless trivia which can never aspire to elevate the human spirit. Already Coca-Cola has become an international emblem. Macdonalds occupies the same space as the Kremlin and the Great Wall of China. Kentucky Fried Chicken can be found all over the globe. In short we have to be alert to the fact that powerful new forces are at work eroding the cultural differences which give so much meaning to life.

In the West, a certain degree of

awareness has caused a counter movement to this blandness of culture. Many people are beginning to appreciate the value of music that has lain dormant for centuries. There is now an enthusiastic revival of ancient instruments which would have been unthinkable thirty years ago. At the same time, ease of recording has opened up rich new fields of musical experience from Asia, Africa and South America. Never before in history have so many different styles and influences been available to so many people. Let us hope it stays that way maintaining harmony in cultural diversity.

Malcolm Baldwin is a gifted teacher, writer and a dedicated environmentalist. Born in the U.K., he has a B.Ed degree from the University of Sussex. He has worked in Theatre and as a film editor mainly for the BBC T.V. He has been cameraman and director for several BBC productions. He is deeply committed to organisations such as Green Peace, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Investigation Agency and has produced environmental educational material. He is currently employed with the Cornwall Energy Project.

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THE MICROSCOPIC TEAM.

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

When Matthew Arnold spoke of the barbarian, the philistine, and the populace, and divided the English society of his time into these three classes, he was looking for signs and traces of culture with a great deal of scepticism and frustration. The rich man who does not care for culture; the middle class man who is satisfied with his narrow successes, and thinks, in his self-importance, that there is nothing else worth acquiring; and the populace which is struggling all the time for mere subsistence, having hardly any time for the finer things of life: if these are the persons that constitute society, how can there be any scope for culture? The dissemination or diffusion of culture presupposes that man is above want; that he has not to struggle for food and shelter; and that the prevalence of law and the dispensation of justice in society are assured. It is difficult for culture to flourish if we have to fight for our daily bread. Any cultural system that does not satisfy these requirements is bound to be partial or fragmentary. The culture of ancient India, Greece, and Rome was a partial culture. It was restricted, in many ways, to one class of people. One can say about their culture what Tennyson said about Sir Lancelot:

*His honour rooted in dishonour stood
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true*

The French and Russian revolutions were upsurges against the fragmentariness and exclusiveness of a culture of this kind. The scene in India

V.K.GOKAK



V.K. Gokak

is changing today for similar reasons. The struggle for power, the bid for white-collar jobs, and the frantic pursuit of security are all off-shoots of this desire for a universal diffusion of culture. The struggle for wealth and power is relentless because it is assumed that a cultured life is impossible without such a foundation.

How then shall we make sure that a universal diffusion of culture becomes possible? In the first place, each individual has to be assured of his absolute security and his full dignity in the society he lives in. This means that an egalitarian society, whether it is made possible through a capitalist, socialist or Marxist initiative, comes into being. Secondly, the security and comfort of an affluent society should not send a person to sleep. Leisure has no value for one who does not know how to use it. The pursuit of culture depends on the availability of leisure. But it also presupposes an intense desire for culture, a passion for perfection. If the common man in Japan spends his spare time on *pachungo* and the aristocrat on playing bridge, there can be no hope for culture. Leisure is bound to be misused by the common man if a deep and steady aspiration for the finer things of life is not implanted in him right from the beginning. This means that our educational system must be overhauled so as to promote the cultural urge in each pupil at home and school. In saying this, we assume that there is an atmosphere of culture in the family and that teachers are available who can inspire in the young this passion for perfection from their childhood. The whole question then turns upon the action of

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individuals, the individuals that compose a family or run a school.

The attempt to diffuse culture on a universal scale is a long and arduous undertaking. Perhaps the Indian sages were right when they assumed that all human beings could not be said to have reached the same stage of evolution. There are manifold evolutionary steps. For one reason or the other, and by virtue of the temperament with which they are endowed, human beings move at different stages of the journey. The idea of the four *varnas* or categories of human beings was therefore conceived as a code of conduct for each one of these categories. Duties were prescribed according to the capacities and inclinations of each category within a religious framework. It is tragic that the principle of heredity gradually distorted and falsified this idea.

A great deal of bitterness has been caused in recent times by the very mention of the phrase *chatur varnas*. The petrification of the *varnas* into a system of castes and creeds and the recognition of social rank and position according to birth cannot be condemned too severely. But the four *varnas* or types characterize human society in all parts of the world. The thinker, the warrior, the purveyor, and the worker typify four kinds or levels of human activity and all of them are essential for the maintenance of society. A progressive society gives equal opportunities to all to prove their worth and aptitude and assigns to each individual the vocation for which he is fitted. We have yet to realize the value of this great truth in a caste-ridden society like ours. Mere variety, without the controlling principle of unity, results in chaos. Almost every religious revival in India vivified the country further by adding one more sect to the numerous castes and creeds that already existed. Secularism could know no end when the living centre of national consciousness was itself dormant.

Unless there is a background of social and cultural unity to this

We live in a chaotic age that is full of contradictions and confusions. We struggle to survive in an era of strikes and other forms of labour unrest when capitalism itself has hardly been able to fulfil the constructive role which Marx assigned to it in Das Capital. The advanced countries tend to dominate developing countries, directly or indirectly.

diversity of castes and creeds and even of political parties in the nation, a structural disintegration may confront our society. The nation must be held together socially and culturally, if it is to be called upon to preserve the multitude of castes and creeds and judge a variety of political issues and programmes. Indian culture has always been instinct with this sense of unity. This sense of unity has to be disengaged from ancient, medieval and modern accretions and reasserted in the midst of a changing world order.

We live in a chaotic age that is full of contradictions and confusions. We struggle to survive in an era of strikes and other forms of labour unrest when capitalism itself has hardly been able to fulfil the constructive role which Marx assigned to it in *Das Capital*. The advanced countries tend to dominate developing countries, directly or indirectly. Several forms of human misery have been eliminated from some parts of the world. But other forms of it have cropped up in our push-button era. In an age pulsating with contradictory ideologies, it has become very difficult for a person to choose his own path of evolution.

The message of the Buddha bears a great relevance to these problems of our contemporary world. The Buddha preached the gospel of liberty, equality, and fraternity far more meaningfully than the French Revolution did. Though he was not sure of the

complete elimination of human misery in the foreseeable future, he advocated compassion which can at least do a great deal to relieve it. Wherever he saw an open conflict between reason and religion, he stressed the need for a scientific and open-eyed approach to spiritual fulfilment. He stood for liberty in the highest sense of the term so that an individual could rise to his own highest stature, going beyond the life of the senses and intellect and climbing into an ineffable transcendence. As for the gospel of equality, he turned his back on the seventh heaven itself and affirmed that he would have nothing to do with it till the last human being was saved from ignorance and bondage. The world was, for the Buddha, a *sangha*, a fraternity, whose sovereignty the individual had to accept if he aspired to exceed himself.

India is now overhauling the structure of its society in order to remould it in the light of such an ideal. From this point of view, secularism, which India has adopted as the sheet-anchor of its social and cultural policy, is indeed a significant philosophy. Secularism can be described as a religion without any religiosity in it. While permitting every individual perfect freedom of belief and conviction, it requires him, as a social unit, to fulfil certain obligations towards the society of which he is a member. Birth is no criterion of worth. He alone is competent who proves his competence by what he

thinks, says, or does. No one has the right to inflict injury on others. The *dhori* and the pyjama, the long coat and the short coat, not to speak of the petticoat, have all of them, their equal rights before the law, provided minimum decency is observed. Each man is free to elect his own mode of worship and living.

The factors which foment social differences in India are now being opposed. Each religion has been assured proper protection while no religion can afford to be aggressive. Each language can grow to its full stature on the lines determined by its own genius. But no single language can strangle or overwhelm another. The liquidation of the *zamindari* system and of the feudal order of princes and the shift of emphasis, with regard to government servants, on their work as servants of the public as distinguished from their position as bureaucrats, are sure to take us a long way on the road to equality and liberty. The real challenge to our democracy today is casteism and communalism. But with the rapid spread of education, this may be a discarded shibboleth.

The social reformer, who is at work in our midst, sometimes proposes drastic remedies which are worse than the disease itself. Intercommunal marriage is thus frequently upheld as the one panacea for all communal differences. A kind of social regimentation is sought to be imposed upon what is essentially the problem of the individual. Marriage is an intensely personal affair. The fact that man is the architect of his own fortune or misfortune is nowhere better borne out than with regard to marriage. The alliances which used to be arranged in the past between royal families on political grounds deserve as much to be condemned as the marriages which are sought to be promoted today for reasons of social unity. If a love marriage is intercommunal, a progressive society is bound to welcome it. But to arrange a marriage on intercommunal lines as a weapon against communalism is to exploit the

individual in the interest of an irrelevant social idea. Such a step can hardly have the desired effect. Instead of promoting social reconciliation, it may as well pave the way for another irreconcilable community.

The real basis of reconciliation lies in the core of human kindliness and tolerance. It has only to be awakened in order to be brought to the forefront. Even today, in the villages, the Hindus and the Muslims live together in perfect amity and respect each other's religion and religious habits, without the Hindu becoming a Muslim or the Muslim a Hindu. We frequently find

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in our towns and villages families belonging to different communities living on the friendliest terms, without discarding their own habits and customs. A day may come when the barriers between communities will fall and all will adopt a universal code of conduct. But it is certain that any compulsion or regimentation towards hastening the dawn of such a day will only end in delaying it further. The great and sure remedy lies not in converting the other man to our fold, caste or creed. It does not also consist in a drastic negation of all such differences. It lies in revolutionizing our own outlook, in changing vision, and in seeing the other man as we see ourselves. Man has to take his stand, not on his egoistic self, but on his

psyche which makes the whole world his kin. He will then be able to feel the pulse of humanity and see steadily and whole, the essential human values which lie masked under the heavy weight of custom and communal habit. Seen in this light, secularism is what Tagore called, "The Religion of Man". It is the credo of Sri Aurobindo's *vishwa manava*.

At a time when there is a wrong insistence on religion, caste, and creed, secularism, which is only a negative attitude, assumes positive significance. It is the stream of clear reason which washes away all impurities of mind and heart. Later, secularism has to be supplemented by innate psychic insight, by that primal human sympathy of which Wordsworth spoke. When we have assimilated the lower aspects of secularism, we shall be ripe for the next transformation. Secularism is thus the great healer of social differences. It is the integral approach that reconciles opposites.

When the social structure of our national life is founded on this basis, it will be possible to project this attitude actively on the international plane. I remember an amusing incident about an Indian couple who went to Germany for a holiday. They did not know a word of German. But a German couple that met them smiled to them in a kindly way and spoke to them through man's first language—the language of gestures. They signalled to the Indian couple as if to ask them whether they were husband and wife. On receiving a nod in the affirmative, the German couple pointed to the Indians' fingers and asked them why they did not have the marriage ring. The Indians did not have the marriage rings on at that time. They admitted as much. Then the German gentleman pointed to the heart suggesting that, when hearts were one, marriage rings did not matter at all.

This incident, I venture to think, brings us to the heart of the matter. It is the heart that matters and not the ring, the language, the creed, or the community which belongs to one or to which

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one belongs. Belongings are mere trappings. It is the soul of man that makes him nobly human. We have seen how soldiers fighting on opposite sides, when the two World Wars were on, felt towards each other like brothers, while lying wounded side by side. In the communal riots that followed in the wake of August 1947, we have known of Hindu families harbouring Muslim refugees at great risk to themselves and vice versa. The greater the difficulty, the greater is the spirit that man displays. One can only hope that a well-planned system of national education will awaken the soul in every individual and build here a new society

on imperishable foundations.

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with a few lines from Sri Aurobindo. These lines are to be found in Canto I, Book XI, of *Savitri*:

*Then in the process of evolving Time
All shall be drawn into a single plan,
A divine harmony shall
be earth's law,
Beauty and Joy remould her
way to live....
The Spirit shall be the master
of this world
Lurking no more in form's obscurity
And Nature shall reverse her*

*action's rule,
The outward world disclose the
Truth it veils.
Even should a hostile force cling
to its reign
And claim its right's perpetual
sovereignty
And man refuse his high spiritual
fate,
Yet shall the secret Truth in
things prevail.*

*For in the march of all-fulfilling Time
The hour must come of the
Transcendent's will:
All turns and winds towards His
predestined ends
In nature's fixed inevitable course
Decreed since the beginning
of the worlds
In the deep essence of created things.*

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MAGAZINE CO-ORDINATORS

Dr. A.B. Soblepure,
2/14 J.J. Hospital Complex
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Jamalpur Gymkhana
Jamalpur, Bihar - 811 214
Sebyasachi Das
D/31, B.J.B. Nagar
Bhubaneswar- 751 014
OVERSEAS:
Mahesh Jethanandani
3197, Adamwood Drive,
San Jose, CA 95148.
Sumati Srinivasan
809, 1001, Main Street (west)
Hamilton, Ont-L8 5A 9, Canada.
Dhruv Agarwal
2305, Sheridan Road,
Bobb, No.401,
Evanston, IL 60201.
Oopale Opera Jita
Studio for creative inquiry,
College of Fine Arts,
111, Carnegie Mellon University,
Pitts Burp. PA 15213,
U.S.A.

We have tried to assimilate, we have tried to reject, we have tried to select; but we have not been able to do any of these things successfully. Successful assimilation depends on mastery; but we have not mastered European conditions and knowledge, rather we have been seized, subjected and enslaved by them. Successful rejection is possible only if we have intelligent possession of that which we wish to keep. Our rejection too must be an intelligent rejection; we must reject because we have understood, not because we have failed to understand...

We preserve indeed a certain ingenuity and subtlety; we can imitate with an appearance of brightness; we can play plausibly, even brilliantly with the minutiae of a subject; but we fail to think usefully, we fail to master the life and heart of things. Yet it is only by mastering the life and heart of things that we can hope, as a nation, to survive.

How shall we recover our lost intellectual freedom and elasticity? By reversing for a time at least, the process by which we lost it, by liberating our mind in all subjects from thralldom to authority. That is not what reformers and the Anglicised required of us. They ask us, indeed, to abandon authority, to revolt against custom and superstition, to have free and enlightened minds. But they mean by these high sounding recommendations that we should renounce the authority of Sayana for the authority of Max Muller, the Monism of Shankara for the Monism of Haecckel, the written *shastra* for the unwritten laws of European social opinion, the dogmatism of *Brahmin pandits* for the dogmatism of European scientists, thinkers and scholars. Such a foolish exchange of servitude can receive the assent of no self respecting mind.



R. BROOKE

ON ORIGINAL THINKING

SRI AUROBINDO

Our first necessity, if India is to survive and do her appointed work in the world, is that the youth of India should learn to *think*—think on all subjects, to think independently, fruitfully, going to the heart of things, not stopped by their surface, free of prejudgments, shearing sophism and prejudice asunder as with a sharp sword smiting down obscurantism of all kinds as with the mace of Bhima. Let our brains no longer, like European infants, be swathed with swaddling clothes; let them recover the free and unbound motion of the gods; let it have not only the minuteness but the wide mastery and sovereignty natural to the intellect of Bharata and easily recoverable by it if it once accustoms

itself to feel its own power and be convinced of its own worth. It cannot entirely shake off past shackles, let it at least arise like the infant Krishna bound to the wain, and move forward dragging with it wain and all and shattering in its progress the twin trees, the twin obstacles to self fulfillment, blind medieval prejudice and arrogant modern dogmatism. The old fixed foundations have been broken up, we are tissues of the waters of a great upheaval and change. It is no use clinging to the old icefalls of the past, they will soon melt and leave their refugees struggling in perilous waters. It is no use landing ourselves in the infirm bog, neither sea nor good dry land, of a second-hand Europeanism. We shall only die there a miserable and unclean death. No, we must learn to swim and use that power to reach the good vessel of unchanging truth; we must land again on the eternal rock of ages.

Let us not, either, select at random, make a nameless hotchpotch and then triumphantly call it the assimilation of East and West. We must begin by accepting nothing on trust from any source whatsoever, by questioning everything and forming our own conclusions. We need not fear that we shall by that process cease to be Indians...It is only if we allow Europe to think for us that India is in danger of becoming an ill-executed and foolish copy of Europe. We must not begin by becoming partisans, our first business as original thinkers will be to accept nothing, to question everything. That means to get rid of all unexamined opinions old or new, all mere habitual *sanskaras* in the mind, to have no preconceived judgements.

Courtesy: *The Call Beyond*.

THE ANIMAL AND INSECT ACT

CECIL RAJENDRA



Finally, in order to ensure absolute national security they passed the Animal and Insect Emergency Control and Discipline Act.

Under this new Act, buffaloes, cows and goats were prohibited from grazing in herds of more than three. Neither could birds flock, nor bees swarm..... This unlawful assembly.

As they had not obtained prior

planning permission, mudwasps and swallows were issued with summary Notices to Quit. Their homes were declared subversive extensions to private property.

Monkeys and mynahs were warned to stop relaying their noisy morning orisons until an official Broadcasting Licence was issued by the appropriate Ministry. Unmonitored publications and broadcasts posed the gravest threats in

times of a National Emergency.

Similarly, woodpeckers had to stop tapping their morsecode messages from coconut tree top to champaka tree.

All messages were subject to a thorough pre-security by the relevant authorities.

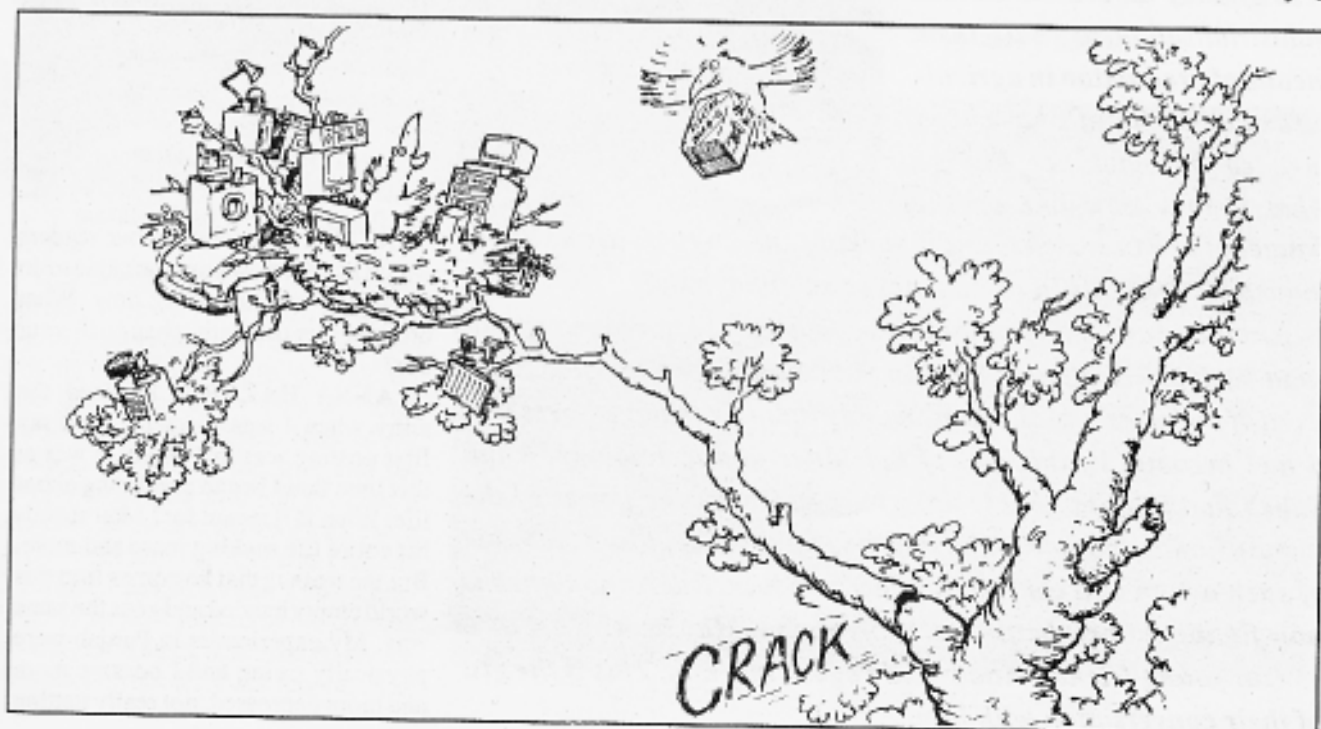
Java sparrows were arrested in droves for rumour-mongering. Cats (Suspected of conspiracy) had to be indoors by 9 o' clock.

Cicadas and crickets received notification to turn their amplifiers down. Ducks could not quack nor turkeys gobble during restricted hours. Need I say, all dogs-alsatians, dachshunds, terriers, pointers and even little chihuahuas-were muzzled.

In the interests of security penguins and zebras were ordered to discard their non-regulation uniforms. The deer had to surrender their dangerous antlers. Tigers and all carnivores with retracted claws were sent directly to prison for concealing lethal weapons.

A month after the Act was properly gazetted the birds and insects started migrating south, the animals went north and an eerie silence handcuffed the forests.

There was now Total Security. ●



AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNA SAHEB HAZARE

ATMANANDA

Urbanites have a way of distancing themselves from reality by sinking into one or several of the clever distracting mechanisms devised expressly for this purpose. In this lulled and soporific state, the inability of our state structures to provide a basic means of survival for those we snobbishly refer to as our 'rural' brethren, hardly bothers us. So what if their lands have been grabbed by the more powerful and destroyed by deforestation and industrialisation, so what if their means of production in agriculture and handicrafts have been invaded by machines and so what if they now live on the fringes of urban societies under sacking and tin roofs in one of the thousands of slums in rootlessness and anonymity?

Anna Hazare is a visionary. He is a deeply inspired man, who went back to his village, Ralegan Siddhi and like a messiah, took it out of the morass of alcoholism and productive sluggishness that it had become. In this age of machines and technology, Anna Saheb had to fight doubly hard to re-establish the power of the human hands and spirit. The state has finally recognised the value of such a man and conferred awards on him. But Anna Saheb is now fighting a new battle-state corruption. May he win.

Our young friends, Atma and Yogesh met him. This is the gist of their conversation with him.



YOGESH SHARMA

ATMA: Anna Saheb, our readers would like to know how you came to do the things you are doing now. What brought this dramatic change in your life?

ANNA HAZARE: I joined the army when I was nineteen. And my first posting was in Punjab. It was at this time that I began pondering about life. What is it meant for? Man spends his entire life seeking more and more. But the truth is that he comes into this world empty handed and goes the same way. My experiences in Punjab were physically trying and I became more and more depressed, not really getting

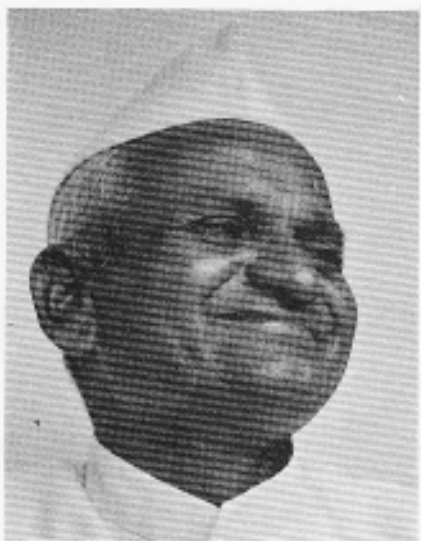
any answers to my questions about the purpose of life. In fact, at one point, I even contemplated suicide. Why should I go through this mundane daily grind when death is inevitable? Should I not preempt it and remove sorrow from my life altogether? Finally it was the sheer domestic responsibility of getting my sister married that stopped me from taking this grim step.

Swami Vivekananda came to my rescue. I chanced upon a book written by him, displayed in a book shop on a New Delhi railway station platform. It was an eye opener. The deeper I went into his books, the more the reason for living emerged. From Vivekananda, I understood the *tatvagyan* or the essence of life, in the concept of service. The goal of life is the enrichment of the soul and a simple way this can be brought about is through service.

A: What is the story of Ralegan Siddhi?

A.H: Swami Vivekananda again. Let me start at the very beginning. I learn't that one's convictions had to be engendered from within. No amount of intellectual rationale can make a person go out and act. The several modern conveniences available today should logically make us more contented. We see rich people in air conditioned cars going to factories that have a high monetary turnover. But then, is it not ironic that these very people have to swallow sleeping pills to get sound, un-worried sleep? Acquisition, possession, these are tinged with great sadness. But service is quite different. Because you work outside of yourself. And it inevitably mutates into a happiness from within.

Let me tell you of an incident that opened my eyes in no small measure. During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, I was driving a lorry load of fellow soldiers near the border when we were bombarded by enemy planes. Most of my colleagues died on the spot and the lorry was riddled with bullets. I had a miraculous escape with only a scratch to show for all this. Why was I saved? I became convinced that I had a purpose to fulfil. I looked at the corpses around me and at that instant, on the Khemkaran border, I was reborn. I was

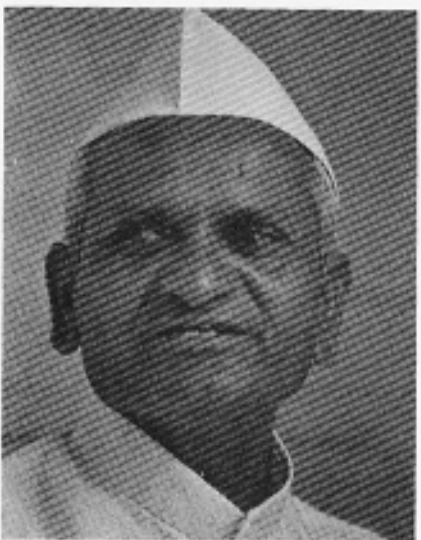


twenty five. One of the decisions I took then was to stay single and devote myself to society. I served in the army till 1975 by which time I would be eligible for pension, and I wouldn't be a financial burden on anyone.

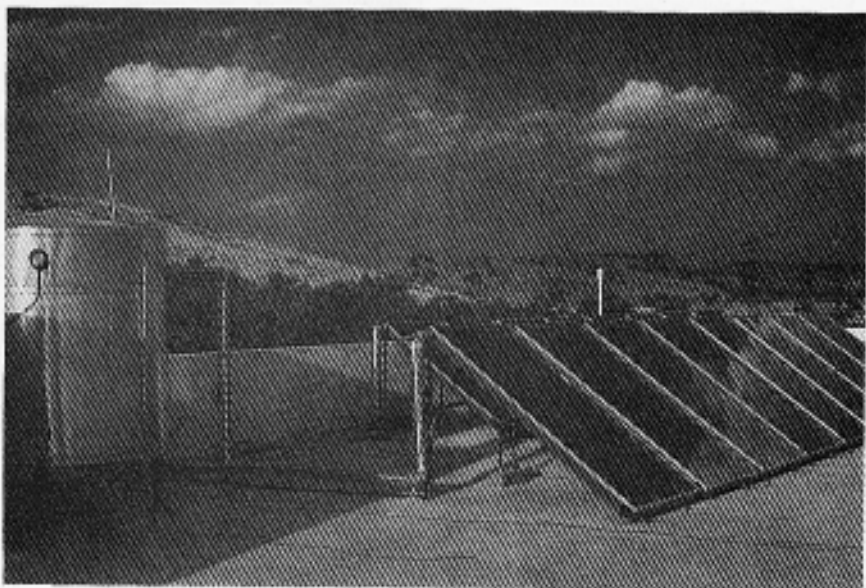
I had to start with myself if I had to help someone else. I first took care of the needs of my family and then moved into the small temple at Ralegan and began work.

A: Could you give us some background of Ralegan?

A.H: Ralegan is a small village in Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra. It straddles 2200 acres with a population of roughly 2000. It receives a mere 15-16" of rainfall, which drained off the



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Solar water heating panels atop the hostel building.



land and contributed nothing to the needs of the village. There was no water in the wells. Only 70-80 acres were irrigated by the wells. Naturally there was never enough food for everyone and 15-20% of the villagers went hungry. 55% bought food from outside. 7-8 moneylenders had a thriving business. To eke out a meagre living, people turned to brewing and distilling illicit liquor. Over time, 40 distilleries came into being and started doing good business. The liquor brewed was sold to the neighbouring villages. Children were fed from the money received. An inevitable problem in the village was alcoholism which became a serious issue.

Whenever I came home on furlough, the situation depressed me immensely. How I could bring about any change in the village preoccupied me. Finally, when I plunged in to my work, I decided to begin from the temple. I renovated it from the Rs. 20,000 I received from my gratuity and provident fund.

A: And then what happened?

A.H: Despite the bleak situation in the village, a few people started coming to meet me. When they saw that I wasn't interested in their money, their faith in me increased. Among them

were 25-30 young people. I set them thinking. Where were they headed? What of Ralegan Siddhi and further, the country itself?

Now you tell me, can you make a hungry man sit down and listen to philosophy? Unfortunately that is all we have been doing since independence. I

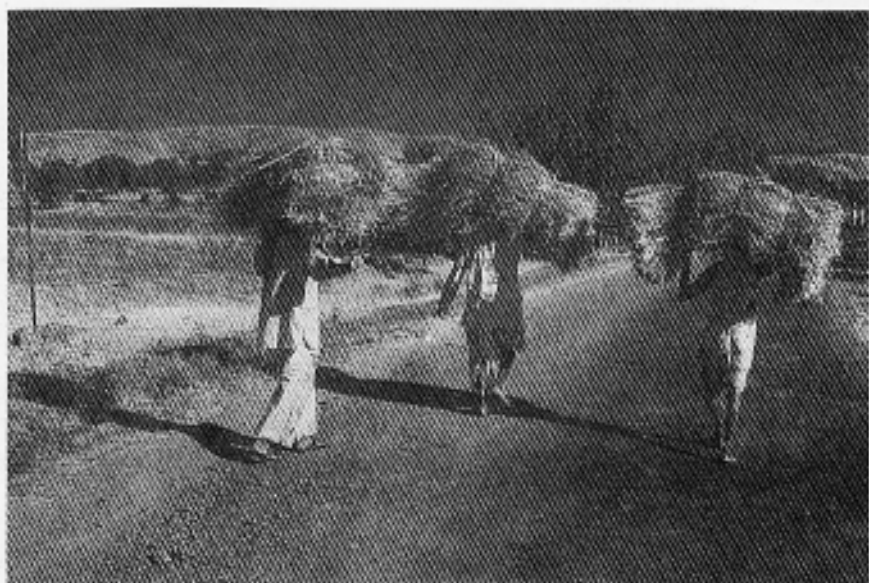
Now you tell me, can you make a hungry man sit down and listen to philosophy?

Unfortunately that is all we have been doing since independence. I realised that the people of Ralegan had to be fed first.

realised that the people of Ralegan had to be fed first.

A: And that is how your well known watershed development scheme was started?

A.H: What we needed was a highly productive system for growing all forms of bio-mass, from food grains to grasses and trees, which would be ecologically sound and sustainable, and not technical systems that give bumper yields in the beginning and discount the future. Resources like land are finite and must be judiciously utilised. Degraded land must be restored, wastelands cultivated and we needed to make sure that agricultural and forest lands are not put to any other use. Along with this, conservation and appropriate utilisation of



Availability of biomass within the village boundary provides fodder, fuel as well as raw material for rope making to landless families.



Smokeless 'chulhas' are not only fuel efficient but also reduce health hazards.

more emphasis to food grains like jowar, bajra, wheat etc. Some cash crops like chillies and onions are also planted and today our onion produce is enough to export to other states. The farmers have decided not to grow sugarcane as it consumes far too much water and benefits a restricted few. The land under irrigation has increased from 40 hectares to approximately 350 hectares. The cropped area has increased from 650 hectares to 871 hectares and the yield per acre has increased from 3-4 quintals to 10-11 quintals. Sometimes even up to 15-20 quintals.

A: Could you give us some idea of the organic farming practised in Ralegan?

A.H.: We have decided as a matter of principle not to use chemical fertilisers, alternatives for which are available all around. Human wastes alone can provide organic fertilisers worth Rs. 10/ from a single house. At present, we have community bio-gas plants for most houses in Ralegan. Of all our projects, one of the most promising seems to be the development of organic fertilisers through breeding of earthworms. This would enable us to produce 1500 tons of fertiliser in a month. We are also developing gobar (cowdung) gas plants to supplement the cooking needs of households. The waste from this, the slurry, is used as manure in the fields. So, at Ralegan, we generate organic manure from three sources-human, earthworms, and animal (cattle) waste.

A: Anna Saheb, I am sure you had a tough time trying to wean away brewers from making illicit liquor. How did you do it?

A.H.: Leadership is the most important thing. He or she has to be inspiring. The leader has to be completely selfless. Only then can any kind of moral change be brought about. In a sense, watershed development came as an alternative to liquor brewing. Society as a whole is quite selfish. Therefore, in order to wean people away from something lucrative, an alternative that is equally, if not more economically viable has to be provided. And, of course, any change means opposition. But opposition is the true

water resources can eradicate drought—a major reason for poverty in our country. I disapprove of artificial irrigation. Micro-watershed development is much better and relatively less expensive. If irrigation becomes at all necessary, then the beneficiaries of the project must share the benefits with those who lost their homes and land when dams or canals are built. I heard about Vilasrao Salunke's *Pani Panchayat*, a conservation oriented water management scheme. We began to follow Salunke's, *Pani adava pani jirawa* policy at Ralegan. This technique increases the water table by trapping the rain water where it falls. We could manage only one crop in a year and I wondered whether it could be increased to two. We created a number of *nala bunds*, small dams etc from higher levels down to the catchment areas. Rainwater started soaking into the soil and the water table rose to the extent that we were now being able to irrigate 1100-1200 acres.

A: How did you manage the costs?

A.H.: *Shramdan* (voluntary labour) was the key. I convinced the villagers to put in the required labour *themselves* as the watershed management that we were trying out was for their own good. *Shramdan* makes everyone committed to the project. *Nala bunds* had to be dug and today, Ralegan has 45 *nala bunds* with a storage capacity of 282.182 Cu. Of course, we had to take minimal help from outside agencies, but the villagers were constantly monitoring the technical norms relating to impervious strata and the quality of construction was thus maintained. The villagers also repaired the percolation tank built by the government and which subsequently failed. After the percolation tank was repaired we dug wells along the flow of groundwater from the tank. These wells were also dug through *shramdan* and are on a co-operative basis.

A: What are the results of the watershed development in terms of produce?

A.H.: All water needs to be used wisely. Specially at Ralegan, we give

I disapprove of artificial irrigation. Micro-watershed development is much better and relatively less expensive. If irrigation becomes at all necessary, then the beneficiaries of the project must share the benefits with those who lost their homes and land when dams or canals are built.

testing stone for any change maker. An activist's first job is to tackle opposition. The ideal way is not to retaliate, but to be firm in establishing your determination to carry on.

A: What is the work ethic you would recommend?

A.H.: One reason why so much work in this country is unfinished is because motivation for work is a short term reward. True work does not expect anything in return, nor is it dependant upon flatterers. The best worker is one who does not carry secret burdens. They will weigh upon you and make your work heavy. And, very importantly, listen to various opinions, but do not try and incorporate every single suggestion into your work.

A: We like to believe that the awareness towards nature is a new phenomenon spurred on by the excesses of man in the twentieth century. What do you believe?

A.H.: This is a misunderstanding. All the ancient scriptures and texts of the world have perceived and written about the spiritual quality of Nature. It is the origin of everything including man. The elucidation of this powerful quality of Nature has almost always been poetic in expression. Even in more practical terms, a saint like Gyaneshwar in his *Gyaneshwari*, written almost 700 years ago, expressed in a *doha* (couplet), the need to preserve water and increase the water table, leading to the conservation of the green cover. Nameswar, another Maratha saint said, 400 years ago, that trees are the crowns over society's head. Peepul trees have always been worshipped as have snakes and other animals. This worship, in India has not been dismissed away as being 'animistic' or 'simplistic' but has woven itself into the fabric of mainstream religion.

A: You have been known to be concerned about young people. How do you reach out to them.

A.H.: Basically I try to reach out to them directly. There are about 1500 youth organisations in Maharashtra who try and remain in touch with us. Nurturing the young segment in the country is our primary responsibility. But the state has been more than lax in doing this.

Therefore, others must take the onus upon themselves. What I feel is that most young people are looking for a role model, someone, who, either directly or indirectly shows them some directions.

A: You have a reputation for being a strict social disciplinarian and for streamlining the value systems of the village. But, what about the pulls from outside? T.V. advertisements, consumer culture, films? Don't the villagers feel denied, deprived?

A.H.: I am sure some of them do, definitely. But there are two key things, which can, to some extent, retain the equanimity of the people. One, inspired leadership that shows by example an alternate system of values based on service of others and two, by providing an ensured means of basic survival such as, food, clothing and shelter. Both these aspects reduce the frustration of not being able to acquire superfluously. And it gladdens all our hearts to see that not only has the rural-urban migration from Ralegan become marginal but also that those who left for greener pastures

to cities have now come home to the green pasture that Ralegan Siddhi has become.

A: In conclusion, what would you like to tell our readers?

A.H.: When you see a sheaf of jowar grains swaying in a field, remember that one grain had to bury itself in the ground in order to create this miracle. By burying itself the grain does not die, it is not destroyed. Instead, it creates thousands of grains. What our country needs are activists like that grain.

Atmananda, 24, works with Business India Television after having done his B.A in Economics from Kirori Mal College and then an M.A. in the same subject at the Delhi School of Economics.

Yogesh Sharma, 21, our photographer, did a B.Sc in Physics at the Kirori Mal College, Delhi University and works as a free lance writer and photographer.

To Anna

*To strive, to seek, to find and not to yeild
Has been thy inimical inspiration
Did someone exclaim at thine smouldering eyes
Whose fire burns steady sheltered within?*

*Every drop of unfaithful rain
Entire worlds contain
Your being itself is reason
For dying embers to sustain.*

*Few find the purpose
To hold that raindrop lest it shatters
Like all else around
You've given meaning to the silent prayer
And now of its own it resounds.*

Venu Arora.

Venu Arora, 21, has just returned from Ralegan Siddhi after spending a month with Anna Saheb. She had gone there on a Spic-Macay Gurukul Scholarship. Venu has graduated in English Honours from the Hindu College, Delhi University. She has now joined the Mass Communication course at the Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi.

One Vishnusharman shrewdly gleaming
All wordly wisdom's inner meaning,
In these five books the charm compresses
Of all such books the world possesses



It is said that an ounce of sense contained in the Panchatantra is better than a ton of scholarship. Most of us are familiar with it from our childhood as 'once-upon-a-time' stories and have read them in abridged forms or in comics. Rarely have we encountered a literal translation in verse form. Indeed, these wise verses, often epigrammatic in style, go to make the real character of the Panchatantra. The stories are charming when regarded as pure narrative, but it is the beauty, wisdom and wit of the verses which lift the Panchatantra above the best story books.

The Panchatantra is a 'niti shastra' or textbook of 'niti'. The word 'niti' roughly means the 'wise conduct of life'. It is witty, mischievous and profoundly sane. The word, 'Panchatantra' means, the 'Five Books', 'the Pentateuch'. Each of the five books are independent, consisting of a framing story with numerous, inserted stories, told by one or another of the characters of the main narrative. The device of the framing story is familiar in oriental works, as in the 'Arabian Nights'. The large majority of the actors are animals, who have, of course, a fairly constant character. Thus, the lion is strong, but dull of wit, the jackal, crafty, the heron stupid, the cat, a hypocrite. The animal actors present far more vividly and shrewdly, undecieved and free of all sentimentality, a view, that piercing the humbug of every false ideal, reveals with incomparable wit, the sources of lasting joy. And this is how it happened....

INTRODUCTION

In the southern country is a city called, Maiden's Delight. There lived a king named, Immortal-Power. He was familiar with all the works dealing with the wise conduct of life. His feet were made dazzling by the tangle of rays of light from jewels in the diadems of mighty kings who knelt before him. He had reached the far shore of all the arts that embellish life. This king had three sons. Their names were Rich-Power, Fierce-Power and Endless-Power and they were supreme block-heads.

Now when the king perceived that they were hostile to education, he summoned his counsellors and said, "Gentlemen, it is known to you that these sons of mine, being hostile to education, are lacking in discernment. So when I behold them, my kingdom brings me no happiness, though all external thorns are drawn. For there is wisdom in the proverb:

*Of sons unborn, or dead, or fools,
Unborn or dead will do;
They cause a little grief, no doubt;
But fools, a long life through.
and again:
To what good purpose can a cow
That brings no calf nor milk,
be bent?
Or why beget a son who proves
A dunce and disobedient?*

Some means must therefore be devised to awaken their intelligence."

And they, one after another, replied; "O King, first one learns grammar, in twelve years. If this subject has somehow been mastered, then one masters the books on religion and practical life. Then the intelligence awakens."

But one of their number, a counselor named Keen, said: "O King, the duration of life is limited, and the verbal sciences require much time for mastery. Therefore let some kind of epitome be devised to wake their intelligence. There is a proverb that says:

*Since verbal sciences have
no final end,
Since life is short, and obstacles
impend,
Let central facts be picked and
firmly fixed,
As swans extract the milk with water
mixed.*

"Now there is a Brahmin here named Vishnusharman, with a reputation for competence in numerous sciences. Entrust the princes to him. He will certainly make them intelligent in a twinkling."

When the king had listened to this, he summoned Vishnusharman and said, "Holy sir, as a favour to me you must make these princes incomparable masters of the art of practical life. In return, I will bestow upon you a hundred landgrants."

And Vishnusharman made this answer to the king, "O king, listen. Here is the plain truth. I am not the man to sell good learning for a hundred landgrants. But if I do not, in six month's time, make the boys acquainted with the art of intelligent living, I will give up my own name. Let us cut the matter short. Listen to my lion roar. My boasting arises from no greed for cash. Besides, I have no use for money; I am eighty years old, and all the objects of sensual desire have lost their charm. But in order that your request may be granted, I will show a sporting spirit with reference to artistic matters. Make a note of the date. If I fail to render your sons, in six month's time, incomparable masters of the art of intelligent living, then His Majesty is at liberty to show me His majestic bare bottom."

When the king, surrounded by his counsellors, had listened to the Brahmin's highly unconventional promise, he was dumbstruck. He entrusted the princes to him, and experienced supreme content.

Meanwhile, Vishnusharman took the boys, went home, and made them learn by heart five books which he composed and called: (i) The Loss of Friends (ii) The Winning of Friends (iii) Crows and Owls (iv) Loss of Gains (v) Ill-considered Action.

These the princes learned, and in six months' time they answered the prescription. Since that day this work on the art of intelligent living, called *Panchatantra*, or the Five Books, has travelled the world, aiming at awakening the intelligence in the young.

*Whoever learns the work by heart,
Or through the story-teller's art
Becomes acquainted,
His life by sad defeat—although
The king of heaven be his foe
Is never tainted.*

THE STORY OF THE LAST EPISODE....

Victor, one of the clever jackals playing retainers to the lion king, Rusty, went to investigate a loud sound, which caused his master so much anguish. First he encountered a huge war drum which made a noise as the tips of the blades of grass beat against it. Upon subsequent investigation, he came across Lively, the bull, who, in fact, was the perpetrator of the sound. Victor's crafty mind began to tick. How can I benefit from both of them? He cleverly manipulated a meeting between Rusty and Lively, creating in both of them mutual fear and awe and above all, gratitude towards himself, Victor. With characteristic cunning and

intrigue, Victor assumed the role of counsellor to Lively. He entreated him to join with him in maintaining a lowly and humble demeanour with the king, so that in the long run, they could both enjoy the affluence that the King would bestow upon them in his confidence. For:

*Whoever is too haughty to
Pay king's retainers honour due,
Will find his feet are tottering—
So Merchant Strong-Tooth with the
king.*

How was that, asked Lively. And Victor told the story of MERCHANT STRONG-TOOTH.

MERCHANT STRONG-TOOTH

There is a city called Growing City on the earth's surface. In it lived a merchant named Strong-Tooth who directed the whole administration. So long as he handled city business and royal business, all the inhabitants were satisfied. Why spin it out? Nobody ever saw or heard of his like for cleverness. For there is much wisdom in the proverb:

*Suppose he minds the king's affairs,
The common people hate him;
And if he plays the democrat,
The prince will execrate him:
So, since the struggling interests
Are wholly contradictory,
A manager is hard to find
Who gives them both the victory.*

While he occupied this position, he once had a daughter married. To the wedding he invited all the townspeople and the king's entourage paid them much honor, feasted them, and regaled them with gifts of garments and the

like. And when the wedding was over, he conducted the king home with his ladies and showed him reverence.

Now, the king had a house-cleaning drudge named, Bull, who took a seat that did not belong to him—this in the very palace, and in the presence of the king's professor. So Strong-Tooth administered a cuffing and drove him out. From that moment the humiliation so rankled in Bull's inner soul that he had no rest even at night. Yet he thought: "After all, why should I grow thin? It does me no good. For I cannot possibly hurt him. And there is sense in the saying:

*Indulge no angry, shameless wish
To hurt, unless you can:
The chick-pea, hopping up and down,
Will crack no frying-pan."*

Now one morning, as he was sweeping near the bed where the king lay half awake, he said: "What impudence! Strong-Tooth kisses the queen." When the king heard this, he jumped

up in a hurry, crying: "Come, come, Bull! Is that thing true that you were muttering? Has the queen been kissed by Strong-Tooth?"

"O King," answered Bull, "I was awake all night because I am passionately fond of gambling. So sleep overpowered me even when I was busy with my sweeping. I do not know what I said."

But the jealous king thought: "Yes, he has free entrance to my palace. So has Strong-Tooth. Perhaps he actually saw the fellow hugging the queen. For the proverb says:

*Whate'er a man desires, sees, does
In broad daylight,
Still mindful, he will say or do
Asleep at night.*

And again:

*Whatever secrets, good or ill,
Men in their bosoms keep,
Are soon betrayed when they are
drunk
Or talking in their sleep.*

After lamenting long, he withdrew his favor forthwith from Strong-Tooth. Not to make a long story of it, he forbade his entrance at court.

When Strong-Tooth saw that the monarch's favor was suddenly withdrawn, he thought: "Ah me! There is wisdom in the stanza:

*Whom does not fortune render
proud?
Whom does not death lay low?
To what rouse do passions not
Bring never ceasing woe?
What beggar can be dignified?
Whose heart no woman stings?
Who trapped by scamps, comes safely
off?*

Who is beloved of kings?

And again:

*Who ever saw or heard
A gambler's truthful word,
A neat and cleanly crow,*

*A woman going slow
In love, a kindly snake,
A eunuch's pluck awake,
A drunkard's love of science,
A king in friends' alliance?*

And yet I never committed an unfriendly act against the king-or anyone else-not even in a dream, not even by mere words. So why does the king withdraw his favor from me?"

Now one day, Bull, the sweeper, saw Strong-Tooth stopped at the palace gate, and he laughed aloud, saying to the doorkeepers: "Be careful, doorkeepers! This fellow Strong-Tooth's

temper has been spoiled by the king's favor and he dispenses arrests and releases. If you stop him, you will get a cuffing, just like me."

And Strong-Tooth reflected on hearing this: "I see. It was Bull's doing. Well, there is sense in the proverb:

*Though foolish, base, and lacking
pride,
A servant at the monarch's side
Will have his honor satisfied.
Though fashioned on a
cowardly plan
And mean, a royal servant can
Resent affronts from any man."*



After this lamentation he went home, abashed and deeply stirred. Then he summoned Bull in the evening, gave him two garments as an honorable present and said: "My good fellow, I did not drive you out by order of the king. It was because I saw you, in the chaplain's presence sitting where you did not belong, that I humiliated you."

Now Bull received the two garments as if they were the Kingdom of Heaven, and feeling intense satisfaction, he said: "Friend merchant, I forgive you. You will soon see the reward of the honor shown me in the king's favor and such things." With this he departed in high glee. For there is wisdom in the saying:

*A little thing will lift him high,
A little make him fall:
Twixt balance-beam and scamp
there is
No difference at all.*

On the next day Bull entered the palace, and did his sweeping. And while the king lay half awake, he said: "What intelligence! When our king sits in the bathroom, he eats a cucumber."

Now the king, hearing this, rose in amazement and said: "Come, come, Bull! What twaddle is this? But I remember that you are a house-servant and I will not kill you. Did you ever see me engaged in that occupation?"

"O King," said Bull, "I was awake all night because I am passionately fond of gambling. So drowsiness overcame me in the very act of doing my sweeping. I do not know what I was muttering. Pardon me, master. I was really asleep."

Then the king thought: "Why, from the day of my birth I never ate a cucumber while engaged in that occupation. And since this blockhead has talked unimaginable nonsense about me, it must be the same with Strong-Tooth. This being so, I made a mistake in taking the poor man's honors from him. Nothing of the sort is conceivable with such men. And in his absence all the king's business and city business is at loose ends."



*A king may scold
Yet servants hold,
If he but pay
Upon the day.*

After thus considering the matter from every point of view, he summoned Strong-Tooth, presented him with gems from his own person and with garments, reinstated him.

"And that is why I say:

*Whoever is too haughty to
Pay king's retainers honor due,*

and the rest of it." "My dear fellow," said Lively, "your argument is quite convincing. Let it be as you say."

After this Victor took him to Rusty and said: "O King, here is Lively. I have brought him hither. The future rests with the king." Then Lively bowed respectfully and stood before the king in a modest attitude. Thereupon Rusty extended over him a right paw plump, firm, massive, adorned with claws as formidable as thunderbolts, and said with deference: "Do you enjoy health? Why do you dwell in this wild wood?"

Thus questioned, Lively related accurately his separation from Merchant Increase and the others. And Rusty, after listening to the story, said: "Have no fear, comrade. Protected by my paws, lead your own life in this forest. Furthermore, you must always take your amusements in my vicinity. For this forest has many drawbacks, since it swarms with numerous savage creatures." And Lively made answer:

"Very well, O King."

Then the king of beasts went down to the bank of the Jumna, drank and bathed his fill, and plunged again into the forest, wherever inclination led him.

Thus the time passed, the mutual affection of the two increasing daily. Now Lively had assimilated solid intelligence by mastering numerous authoritative works, so that in very few days he planted discernment in Rusty, dull as was his mind. He weaned him from forest habits and taught him village manners. Why spin it out? Lively and Rusty did nothing but hold secret confabulations every day.

This being so, all other animals of the retinue were kept at a distance. As for the two jackals, they did not even have an entrée. More than that, as soon as they lacked the lion's prowess, the whole company of animals, not excluding the two jackals, suffered grievously from hunger and huddled together. As the proverb puts it:

*A king, though proud and pure of
birth,
Will see his servants flee
A court where no rewards are won,
As birds a withered tree.*

And again:

*They may be honoured gentlemen,
They may devoted be,
Yet servants leave a monarch who
Forgets the salary.*

While, on the other hand:

*A king may scold
Yet servants hold,
If he but pay
Upon the day.*

Indeed, all the creatures in this world, adopting cajolery or one of the other three devices, live by eating one another. For example:

*Some eat the countries: these are
kings;
The doctors, those whom sickness
stings;*

*The merchants, those who buy their things;
And learned men, the fools.*

*The married are the clergy's meat;
The thieves devour the indiscreet;
The flirts their eager lovers eat;
And Labor eats us all.*

*They keep deceitful snares in play;
They lie in wait by night and day;
And when occasion offers, prey
Like fish on lesser fish.*

Now Cheek and Victor, robbed of their master's favor, took counsel together, for their throats were pinched with hunger. And Victor said: "Cheek, my noble friend, we two seem to have lost our job. For Rusty takes such delight in Lively's conversation that he neglects his business. And the whole court is scattered every which way. What is to be done?"

And Cheek replied: "Even if the master does not take your advice, still

you should admonish him to correct his faults. For the proverb says:

*Good counselors should warn a king
Although he pay no heed
(As Vidur warned the monarch blind)
To cease from evil deed.*

And again:

*Good counselors or drivers
may not duck
From kings or elephants that
run amuck.*

Besides, in introducing this grass-nibbler to the master you were handling live coals." And Victor answered: "You are right. The fault is mine, not the master's. As the saying goes:

*The jackal at the ram-fight;
And we, when tricked by June;
The meddling friend-were playing
A self-defeating tune."*

"How was that?" asked Cheek. And Victor told three stories in one, called **GODLY AND JUNE**.

To be continued....

In 1924, Arthur W. Ryder, the well known American oriental scholar translated the Panchatantra from Sanskrit to English. It is one of the best of all existing translations in any foreign language. The text here translated, dates back from the year 1199 A.D. We are happy to serialise and present the Panchatantra, interspersing verse and prose as translated by Ryder and published by Jaico.

Illustrations: Oroon Kumar.



This essay attempts to critically examine, in the context of the crisis that faces humankind, certain new paradigms. These are already being stated in various scientific disciplines. The emphasis here however is on the implications of these developments for the social and human sciences especially anthropology, history and archaeology with special reference to the Indian subcontinent, perhaps because I am somewhat familiar with this region. The contention here is that the social and human sciences continue to be based on unexamined assumptions of the Newtonian-Cartesian epistemologies. These have been surpassed by the sciences themselves moving into metaphysical realms undreamt of hitherto, especially in the fields of chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, astronomy and so on. It is interesting to note that the common reference point emerging in all these disciplines is Consciousness, the emergence of an awareness of Global Consciousness in which we are all enmeshed. At the subatomic level the ungraspable fundamental energy translates itself quite smoothly into metaphysics and philosophy of the mystics. The evidence of the latter is in terms of existential experience of the *Now*, which is not easily describable in words. But the evidence from various cultures through time speaks of states that are equally comparable and verifiable as in any scientific methodology. The evidence is especially clear in such experiential, meditative and contemplative disciplines as poetry, painting, music, sculpture and so on which are related to the total life-style of that culture. Arts, in terms of modernity is quite different since it refers to an isolated fragmentary phenomenon. It is being realised by few that authentic expressions in these areas as probably in all areas of creativity, emerges from a totality or wholeness of Life. Here, there are no barriers between the sacred and the secular, between aesthetics, art, spirituality and any this-worldly or other-worldly life. Further these states are communicable beyond the verbal and

SCIENCE AND NEW DIRECTIONS

S.C. MALIK

symbolic level although the latter are equally essential as codified or encoded keys which point towards and open up dimensions not available otherwise. But symbolic behaviour often becomes a mere mechanical ritual as is common place in the modern world in most walks of life. Importantly more so,

these states are known by even the uninitiated by the resonance and empowerment that is created all around; this sense of communion.

Thus, to speak about human behaviour at any level, without taking into account, consciousness, not necessarily as it was given in traditional



THE BIOLOGIST

Rene Descartes. His division of the world into res cogitans (mind) and res extensa (matter) "allowed scientists to treat matter as dead and completely separate from themselves, and to see the material world as a multitude of different objects assembled into a huge machine"

The contention here is that the social and human sciences continue to be based on unexamined assumptions of the Newtonian-Cartesian epistemologies. These have been surpassed by the sciences themselves moving into metaphysical realms undreamt of hitherto.

systems of knowledge but as is being given by contemporary scientific knowledge, is to be misled into faulty generalizations that are then used by those who direct the destinies of societies and of nation-states. The results of such policies that rely on unthought of premises even by those who claim to be specialists, is much too obvious not only in terms of havoc and destruction caused in this century alone but the humanistic attitudes that have got drowned in the extensively consumeristic and object-oriented modern world. The damage that is being done is to the psyche of man, and no amount of analysis of external social

conditions, howsoever sophisticated the method might be, will yield any results. Today, there are many such pious statements made all over the world, for a peaceful and humane society. Infact, even joining the bandwagon of holism will not create it, since the problem is a psychological one, an internal and inward one that requires total attention by at least a critical mass of people if not a vast majority of the population of humankind.

What does the new science speak of? In brief, it speaks of interconnectedness, interdependence, within a coherent evolutionary worldview indicating the emergence of a global consciousness essential for Man. It is a self-referential system linked entirely to the holistic ecological perception of reality. This is not to deny the ancient wisdom of all kinds of societies even those who are today somewhat untouched by the urban-industrial influences though how these will escape the onslaught of destructive forces is a moot point. But the new hope for harmony and integration has to emerge in a rediscovery and recreation by individuals and collectivity that is manifested all on its own, *in contemporary terms and idioms*. This approach requires not only a conceptual or paradigmatic shift but also one at the experiential level to be discovered by each being experientially. It is a package deal of unity, mutuality and harmony, between the head and the heart. Now, perception itself is action. Contemporary knowledge has generated quantitative and qualitative data that points towards a harmonic convergence of different dimensions of human existence.

It is urgent for social and human sciences to rethink and re-examine their explorations in the above light since in everyday life it is their findings that are used by decision-makers. External remedies will not reduce the biological, nuclear and ecological disasters that are upon us already, not merely imminent. We are all aware of how the manipulation of material phenomena has produced suicidal results, as is apparent in the sale and production of

Francis Bacon "For Bacon, knowledge of the world acquired through scientific endeavour was not to be the mere object of contemplation, but should be put to the work so that the human race could ultimately assume mastery and control over nature in the pursuance of its own interests."



THE ECOLOGIST

armaments that is known as MAD-mutually assured destruction. The control of scientific and technological power is in the hands of small men with no vision or statesmanship, and most policies are based on adhocracy and selfish interests-not universal or global-howsoever altruistic these may sound. But the sense of responsibility is not merely to emerge with the bureaucrat, technocrat and scientist. It lies squarely with the social scientist who has changed little in incorporating the latest 'thinking', i.e., if there is any authentic thinking done at all. In fact, it

The control of scientific and technological power is in the hands of small men with no vision or statesmanship, and most policies are based on adhocracy and selfish interests-not universal or global-howsoever altruistic these may sound. But the sense of responsibility is not merely to emerge with the bureaucrat, technocrat and scientist.

is this non-thinking of fundamentals that is really at the root of the crisis; i.e., the absence of this forgotten ability to 'stand and stare' for a while.

The break through in biology, physics and so on seems to have had little impact on anthropology and allied disciplines since these continue to dismally follow in the footsteps of the colonial 19th century approaches, while claiming to know and understand human communities and thereby to suggest some predictability of human behaviour. But none of these researches on communities has taken care of any of the challenges facing humankind today, in the wake of unthought following of the notions of progress and development. The application of the Newtonian world view to human societies has to give way to an Einsteinian one, if world civilization is to get back on the rails taking into account the convergence of matter and consciousness. This is what one learns from the Theory of Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty, Bohm's Law of Complementarity, Schrodinger's resolution of particle/wave paradox, Prirogine's dissipative structures based on self-organizing and self-transcendent systems and Roger Sperry's right and left implications of hemispheric brain processes, etc., etc.

It all leads one to contemplate on the physico-physiological and psychic processes reflecting the unity of energy consciousness within which the researcher himself functions.

There are thus available radically revolutionary alternatives for the emergence of a new human social order within reach of the twenty-first century, and this is a must for the survival of humankind itself. The direction is clearly in understanding the psychological malaise. Once there is a clear awareness of where the fault is, in the circuit so to speak, new channels will open up in the brain which have been lying dormant for eons in the evolutionary process. Of course, mystical insights of yore, such as the one-ness of Brahman, are being correlated to the discoveries of science which states that matter in some way is a graded manifestation of consciousness. All this is being recognised as a more accurate expression of the 'real' structure of the universe rather than what classical theories of science gave us. The over-

lap of mind over matter is also upon us. But all these new directions also must have an urgency for the social and human sciences if these are to break through the old barriers that continue to run everyday life in terms of contradictions and conflict in, an already much perplexed neurotic humankind. The task is, therefore, to incorporate these contemporary and ancient insights into the new state of social and human sciences so that with a fresh epistemology and ontology it can help in the formation of a new social and moral order which must take place either through man's conscious choice and volition or through some haphazard law of the jungle, so to speak.

Each age and each generation has to begin afresh once again, not in a repetitive manner, but discover and evolve for itself, experientially, its own expressions of the eternal truth, especially in an age when man considers himself to be the main actor and director, rather than relying upon some higher deity, at least, in human affairs. But this

places a load of responsibility on him/herself, experientially and existentially. The task has never been so urgent than it is today, since not only human civilization but life on the planet itself is in severe jeopardy, despite the apparent glamour on all fronts about the 'brave new world', even if 1984 is long past gone outwardly. All the external threats of ecological and nuclear disasters are symptoms of a deadly psychological and spiritual disorder in the human mind itself which is the covert culprit that one is seldom aware of.

Dr. S.C. Mallik is a U.G.C. Professional Research Scientist at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. He has authored a number of monographs on his chief concern—the disintegration of inter-connectedness in disciplinary areas. He has recently written a book—Modern Civilisation—A Crisis of Fragmentation.





THE MEANING AND POWER OF SILENCE

YOGESH SHARMA

The Space Age'. 'The Computer Age'. 'The Atomic Age'. 'The Industrial Age'. These are some of the terms used to describe the times that we live in. Each of these are attempts to convey a predominating factor that distinguishes modern civilization from the earlier ones. Using the same criterion, would we not be justified in coining another term: 'The Noisy Age'? Is it not true that just about everything that symbolizes modern civilization—our megalopolises, our factories, automobiles, rockets, aeroplanes, steam engines, nuclear bombs, our parliaments, even our sports stadia—let out a cacophony of sounds unmatched by any previous civilization?

It is not just that a lot of noise exists. What is more significant is that noise is considered a necessity. It is encouraged, while silence is frowned upon. A

T.S. ANANTHU

An executive's chances of rising high in the ladder are slim if he does not 'make his presence felt' by making the required noises at appropriate fora. A politician can never hope to survive unless he continuously hogs 'media attention', even if that means making the most ridiculous claims or taking the most unreasonable or extreme position.

boy who sits silently in the classroom, without asking questions, is considered as lacking an essential ingredient for a good education and a successful career. An executive's chances of rising high in the ladder are slim if he does not 'make his presence felt' by making the required noises at appropriate fora. A politician can never hope to survive unless he continuously hogs 'media attention', even if that means making the most ridiculous claims or taking the most unreasonable or extreme position. A worker gets a good increment in his wages only if his union holds noisy rallies, abuses the management, organises demonstrations or holds wild-cat strikes. 'The wheel that squeaks the most gets the oil' is a maxim that prevails everywhere. Even religious institutions proclaim the value of prayer (including the silent ones) through blaring loudspeakers! In a word, silence is



ORSON KUMAR

considered *bad*. 'How can you be silent when so much is amiss? How can you be silent about *sati*, injustice, oppression, the caste system, exploitation, the poor man's needs?' is a constant admonition on the part of the 'activists'.

There is, no doubt, a negative aspect to silence. This aspect stems from its possible association with either cowardice or selfishness. I may keep quiet about an injustice taking place in front of my eyes because I am afraid of the consequences of speaking out. I may not join a demonstration against eve-teasing because, being a man, I prefer conditions where women can be easily exploited by men. Conversely, are those who speak out against various evils free from them? Is it not much easier to write or talk about ideals and principles, even to fight for them, than to live them? While there certainly are

The relationship of silence to action is akin to that of the seed to the tree: the seed is responsible for the tree even though it is nowhere to be found once the tree comes into being.

situations where it takes great courage to stand up and speak, are there not other situations where it takes even greater courage to sit down and listen?

Silence is a much-maligned and much-misunderstood term mainly because we equate both speech and silence with what takes place at the outward, physical level. This is a consequence of the modern paradigm of think-

ing under which we function, a paradigm that tends to ignore everything which is invisible to the physical senses. Therefore, we take it for granted that all that matters is matter, and hence conclude that 'nothing is happening' when no 'thing' happens. By doing so, are we not blinding ourselves to the more important aspects of our existence? Isn't the subtler, inward part of us the ultimate determinant of how we eventually behave at the outward, physical level?

Once we break out of the confines of this modern paradigm of thinking, we have taken the first step towards appreciating the meaning, the beauty and the power of silence. There is actually much more to silence than meets the eye. The familiar Indian invocation, "Shanti, Shanti, Shanti" attempts to convey this. We generally translate "Shanti" as 'Peace', which is not incorrect, but which tends to hide the important fact that this invocation does not concern itself merely with peace in its external forms. This is conveyed symbolically by invoking "Shanti" thrice. The reference is to peace at three different levels, connected together in a hierarchical fashion—first, peace at the deepest level of our inner being, which brings about peace at the second level, that is, in our thoughts, and which in turn results in peace at the third level, in the world, i.e., peace in its external forms. Thus, external peace is seen as a mirage unless accompanied by an attempt to gain peace in the inner core of our being. It is when we investigate this inner core where (unlike at the outer level) peace and silence are synonymous that the deeper meaning as well as the grandeur of silence becomes evident.

When looked at from this higher level, there is nothing as potent and powerful as silence. It is the ancestor of all our actions, of all that takes place at the outer or physical level. It gives birth to our thoughts, which in turn is the breeding ground of all our actions. The relationship of silence to action is akin to that of the seed to the tree: the seed is responsible for the tree even though it is nowhere to be found once the tree comes into being.

The power of silence is actually

infinite. This fundamental truth has been the cornerstone of the teachings of all saints and mystics, as for example conveyed in the Biblical advice, "Be still and know that ye are God". Lao Tzu, the Chinese sage, described the supreme law governing the universe, which he called "Tao", in terms of silence and non-action using very beautiful poetry:-

*Tao abides in non-action
Yet nothing is left undone.....
A great tailor cuts little.....
That without substance can enter
where there is no room.....*

*Without going outside you may
know the whole world
The farther you go, the less you
know.....
Teaching without words and work
without doing are understood by
very few.....*

*The very highest is barely known by
men
When actions are performed
Without unnecessary speech
People say 'We did it!'*

Indian traditions have abundant references to the importance and power of silence. Guru Nanak referred to the

Primary Principle repeatedly as the 'unspoken Word', and the Vedas speak of it as 'unstruck music'. Kabir spelt out in great detail the benefits of perfect silence. Keeping the body still and silent is only the first of several stages on this path. Having stilled the body, we have to learn to still our thoughts, and gradually extend this to the inner core of our being. When we can learn to make our body completely still and silent, Kabir explained, we are no longer confined to its boundaries in space and time—we take on the much subtler, astral levels of being. Each of these subtler bodies represents a form of existence unbelievably more powerful than what we are accustomed to in the physical body. Thus, the power of our being is directly proportional to the extent of stillness or silence that we are capable of achieving.

As Albert Einstein pointed out in his definition of a human being, the striving for stillness itself constituted "a foundation for inner security".

A good example of what this striving can accomplish is evident in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. He started off as an ordinary human being, full of imperfections, with little ability to influence events or people. As is well known, he ended up as one of the most influential and powerful personalities the world

has ever seen. What is not so well known is the role that silence in its deepest form played in accomplishing this wonderful transformation. It was the art and science of silence that enabled Gandhi to listen to his famous Inner Voice, and it was this silence that formed the foundation for the development of 'soul-force', the fountainhead of his power of *satyagraha*. As he himself put it:-

"Silence is a great help to a seeker after truth like myself. In the attitude of silence, the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness—the soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height."

Silence is not merely keeping quiet, it is the art and science of contacting the Silent One within by overcoming the egocentric preoccupations of the mind. The Silent One is actually our own real self, our soul.

T.S. Ananthu is an eminent Gandhian worker, and has been associated with the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, for several years. He has written extensively on Gandhi and his approach to various aspects of society and life, particularly to environment and farming. T.S. Ananthu, now lives near Bangalore.



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In this issue, as a mark of respect to a literary giant, we present a selection of the poems of V.K. Gokak, to whom THE EYE pays homage. His felicity of language, his concerns and the essentially indigenous idiom which he employs have stamped his works with a spontaneity that warms the heart of the reader.

THE RHYTHM AND BEAUTY OF EARTH

O the rhythm and the
beauty of earth!
Green above green,
stair below stair,
the cresting hills, the
undulations,
the dipping valleys!
The green mist of cloudy
grass,
the yellow flower-beds
curving, curving,
the wild plantain flower,
sculptured lower,
the bunch of onyxes and
rubies
blooming from one stem:
O the beauty of earth!

And the water that bathes
the earth!
Water bursting from the
heart of mountains
and carving giant rocks;
water falling in supreme
abandon
from dizzy heights like an
unwinged bird;
water playing hide-and-
seek in crevices,
meeting like frolicking
children: here we are!
Water carded like cotton
spun and woven into
foam-white sheets;
water that's one again,
again
in the heart of the winding
vale:
how many forms of water!

This plateau blanketed by
clouds
reveals a sleeping hamlet
when the clouds lift.
In the valley where clouds
flow like a river,
A cloud lift shows the
green earth below.
Loveliness within loveli-
ness,
layer within layer!
Plunge into this infinity of
beauty
and gather the truth.

A MAIDEN ON WOMANHOOD

An ape fingering a ruby he chanced by,
Man has laid waste our kind and buried us
In the dung-heap of Time, dead to the world.
Nautch-girls to the *Shudra*, courtesans
To soldiers, *Devadasis* to the brahmin
And to the farmer-acres for the ploughing.
Hens to the strutting merchant, waiting to lay him
Numberless golden eggs. He prized them much.
But he drove out a wife when she could bear him
No male issue, like a buffalo when
It ceases to yield milk; got him another
Even as a bangle-seller in a fair
Holds the soft hands of many unthinking maids.
Princes who set up stables for their steeds
Built harems for their queens and spoke to them
As to young parrots caged in burnished gold.
Our wedding came when, helpless in the cradle,
We lay more ready for the nurse's arms
Than for the husband's; strangled with necklaces
When we were pining for more light and air.

The Pandavas divided Draupadi
As children would a guava. Helen of Troy
And Padmini-their beauty was their doom.
A fair woman with a pretty nose
And dark hair and eyes drew after her
A swarm of centaurs who her kinsmen slew,
Burnt down her home, harried her countryside
Till beauty was regarded as a curse
Fallen on fated clans unloved of gods.
And the gods too were crimson with this guilt.
Indra raped Ahalya, old Gautum's wife.
The world knows Brahma's incest. A dancing girl
Lifting the wine-glass to their lips and feasting
Their lidless eyes, was woman to the gods!

One thought the poets would at least have sense.
But they sinned against our kind - for similies!
Like entomologists who classify
Rows of butterflies in glass-cases pinned,
They measured our waists with tape and listed us
As lion-waisted, deer-shaped, elephantine.
They, in their emporium, hung us limb by limb,
Likening the nose to the *champak*, eyes to the bees.
Throat to the conch and thighs to plaintain-stems!



BHAKT DEB

POEMS BY V. K. GOKAK

Solomons, they said we were salmon-eyed.
We were a sofa set, a chinese tea-tray,
A Persian carpet in a drawing room.
Gods and men like demons undid us
Deeming that Woman's body was Woman entire
And toyed with it, covering themselves with dust.
They flung away the creeper of the soul
That burgeoned in her earth and made her sing
Her ruin down the corridors of Time.

God gave woman her loveliness that she might
Gift it nobly to the man she loved;
And He gave her a soul that outlives sex,
Through which, though diverse, she is one with man.
Male and Female are two Ideas and Forms -
Four constituents of the universe.
They meet and mingle in a million ways
In numberless individuals, age to age,

From earth to heaven and complete the world.
Man is something of Woman, Woman of Man.
Complements in the cosmic plan of life,
They both fulfil themselves and fulfil God.
Diversely endowed, they still obey
The call of the same Spirit that lives within
And towards the same Mansion bend their steps.
Half man, half woman in body, mind and heart,
Incarnate in the universe is God.
He is both and neither. He is all and none.
He has no gender, that engenders the universe.
The engendered is clay; the soul is genderless.

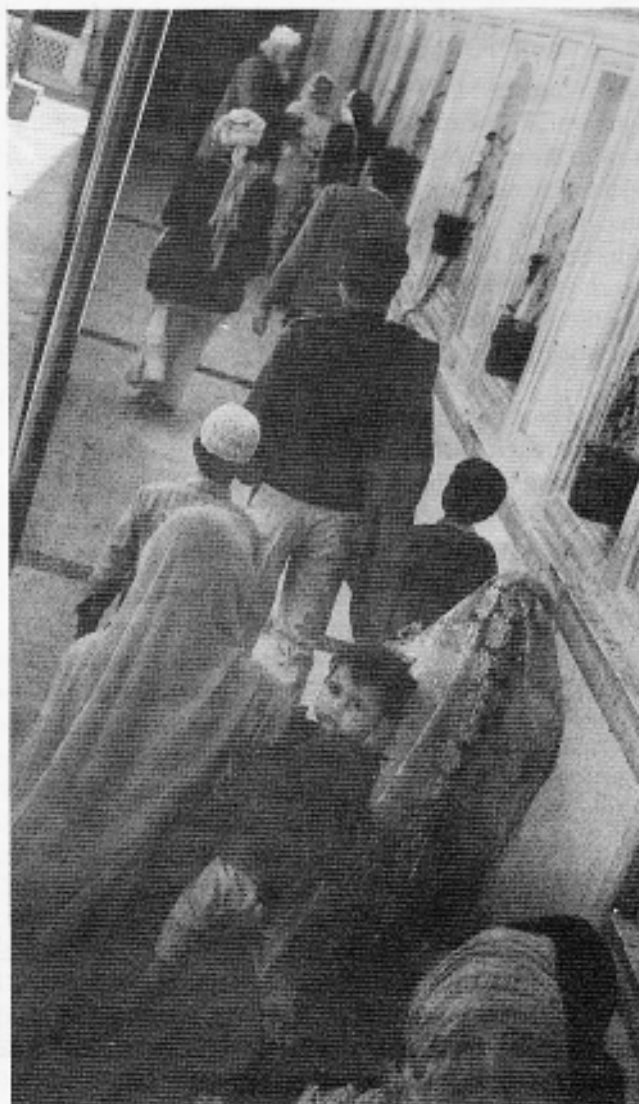
Bring in the newer world, the newer life
That has a use for woman's soul. Bring in
The world where woman's body is a shrine
To her soul's starry flame. O worshippers
Of the vacant shrine, worshipping the light divine!
True companions in the fleshly pilgrimage,
Cupid and Psyche for romance and youth,
Juno and Jupiter in loveliness
And one soul in two lodgements on Love's plane
Woman and Man will, to the end of Time,
Pursue the One that lives in them as Two.
And I too shall await the destined man
Who will perfect himself, perfecting me,
Pushing our bark beyond the shores of Time
Towards the pole-star of the Infinite.

THE PILGRIMS

These the pilgrims to the Temple.
May these archetypes of light
Crush the world's crassitude and wrong,
Fill patterns of unending song
And arch the sky like birds in flight.

Welling out of my heart's fullness
May these simple words of mine
In admiration and in praise,
Like flowers strewn on a holy shrine,
Help you in your pilgrimage.

And make you turn your silent gaze
Back to the Heraclitean fire
That, kindled once, is ever ablaze,
And frees you from all base desire.



YOGESH SHARMA

AWAKENING

Arise, O Youth!
 in your face is valour beaming,
 in your eyes the godhead dreaming.
 A sovereign will in your tall bearing
 stands erect. There is a daring
 that rocks the world in your young arms,
 a freedom in your steps that charms:
 arise, arise!

Awake, arise and rule your realm.
 The earth is yours. Be at the helm.
 Master of all that you behold,
 servant of each one, too, in the fold!
 Be the Aswin of this age
 and of the next the royal sage!
 The great day dawns. O Morning Star!
 Bring in the Sun's triumphal car!
 Arise, arise!

O conch-throated! long war proclaim
 On the world's wickedness and shame.
 Throw to the winds all caste and creed.
 modern meanness; ancient greed.
 March on, kill with your sun-like disk
 the dragon and the basilisk.
 To each god his task assign.
 Make life a symphony divine.
 Arise, arise!

Arise and twang your far-famed bow!
 Meet with magic shafts the foe.
 At one twang let selfhood die
 and love unfurl its flag on high
 and life, the lily-maiden, wed
 you, by the Dawn-Goddess led.
 Arise, arise!

May heaven and earth together twine,
 illumined by a plan divine.
 O bring the elixir of life
 to a nation long at strife.
 Re-enthroned for the rank and file
 the ancient mother in exile.
 God-blossom on the human tree
 and soul of all that's yet to be:
 Messiah, Hero, Avatar!
 Infinity's crown, our life's star!
 Arise, arise!



ORSON KIDMAR

THE ROAD UNENDING

You have broken beyond the bounds of beautiful forests
 And toiled up the mountain-ranges, peak by peak,
 You have diffused everywhere a smile
 Radiant like that of the stars.
 Why, then, be down-hearted, my child?
 Why turn back and run?
 You have set your heart on the bird of paradise.
 A dream is on your brow, transfiguring your life.
 Why not pursue it for ever and ever and ever?

Scatter worn-out creeds to winds,
 Plunge headlong into the flames of suffering
 And reap from them the harvest of endless light.
 You have set your heart on the bird of paradise.
 A dream is on your brow, transfiguring your life.
 Why not pursue it for ever and ever and ever?

Attune yourself to the world around you,
 Forget the pomp and pride that lie writhing in the dust.
 Put your trust in the beauty that is to come
 And pursue it for ever and ever and ever!

*Send in your poems, with your name, age,
 occupation and address, to:*

*Mayura Tewari, Poetry Editor,
 39, Anand Lok, New Delhi-110 049*

BOOK REVIEW

LAND OF FIVE RIVERS

Stories Selected by Khushwant Singh
Price: Rs.55.
Published by: Orient Paperbacks, 1991.

Indian publishing houses have risen bravely to the challenge of threatened book famine from last year's import restrictions. Orient Paperbacks are to be congratulated for bringing to the reading public a number of attractive and affordable books recently.

With characteristic tongue-in-cheek, the editor of the collection being reviewed, Khushwant Singh, disclaims commonality of themes, locales, original language or even origin of authors of these stories. To assert in his introduction, that in this collection of stories from Punjab there is nothing exclusively Punjabi, is excellent ideology in these days of separatist passions and suspicions.

In several other ways too these stories surreptitiously defy prevailing strategies of disaffection. It is not only that Krishan Chander, Amrita Pritam, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Ajit Kaur or that Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and English have been united within these covers but the stories themselves create a vivid panorama of the confusing, colourful melting pot that is India.

The first story, *A Punjab Pastoral* by the editor, presents Yusuf Masih, the Christian, who sees no incongruity in decorating his walls with the Hindu pantheon while his Illinois mentor

shakes his head over 'this queer country'. K.A. Abbas mocks our proclivity for harbouring prejudices and misconceptions about 'other' Indians when Burhanuddin watches Sardarji, the object of his dislike, die to save the former from rioters. Sadat Hasan Manto's famous story, *An Exchange of Lunatics* concludes with the lunatic, Bishen Singh lying in the no-man's land between India and Pakistan in utter refusal of having to choose where he should belong. In G.S. Sandhu's story *Godson*

Shah and Bulle Shah and the poetry of 'Virha da Sultan', Shiv Kumar Batalvi. Here flows a subterranean stream of melancholy and world weariness. Both the dark and the shining streams flow in these stories. In Amrita Pritam's story, *Stench of Kerosene*, undying love wears the mask of death. In Kartar Singh Duggal's, *Night of the Full Moon*, a woman pays for one night of illicit love with the life of her bride-to-be daughter. Abducted during partition, Rajinder Singh Bedi's Lajwanti finds that she

An Excerpt

"I must admit that although his singing used to disturb me, it instilled peace in the minds of most people. I could seldom catch the words of the hymns. His voice had the force and flow of a hill torrent, the deep gloom of unseen, unknown caverns of the ocean...I cannot really describe the quality of his voice except that to me Soorma Singh was nothing except his voice. It reflected his loneliness, his utter solitude in the wide, wide world, his agitated search, his unquenched thirst, his unappeased hunger; it was the cry of his soul, an agonising cry which rang through the melody of his songs..."

from Soorma Singh by Balwant Singh

Trial the yellow scarves of new converts identifies them for massacre by Sikh crusaders.

Events of the past decade have committed us to search for comprehension of the Punjabi's resurgent and defiant 'otherness'. The pan-Indian perception of a bluff, naive and generous personality is enforced in many of these stories. Eminent jurist, G.D. Khosla's creation, Sohne Shah, Khushwant Singh's Moola Singh, Balwant Gargi's, Hundred mile runner, Krishan Chander's, Tai Eesree and many others depict this aspect of the Punjabi character.

There is an alternate strain in this character however, to be discerned in the plaintive strain of the cameleer's *tappa*, the songs of the Sufis, Waris

has been 'rehabilitated but not accepted'.

Six of the twenty one stories here deal with the experience of partition. For four decades creativity was traumatised by this shattering event, with the exception of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. Our new troubles made the old ones due for a catharsis. In the eighties the theme found visual expression in two T.V. serials and the exhibition of Satish Gujral's graphics of huddled mourners. The most powerful stories in this volume are based on those uncertain months of parting and beginning-stories by Abbas, Bedi, Manto and Sandhu.

Some writers here have chosen to deal with the bleakness of contempo-

rary urban life. These stories could belong as well to the land of the Narmada or the Hooghly. Gurmukh Singh Jeet, Ajit Kaur, Usha Mahajan have written these stories about marital infidelity and material inadequacies. The protagonist of Upendra Nath Ashk's, *The Nuptial Bed* is caught in the throes of an oedipal dilemma on his wedding night.

Irony, whether tragic or sardonic marks every story of this collection. Simpler comedy provides a change of taste for those who may feel disinclined for the heavier stuff. Satindra Singh's, *Mahabharata Retold* adds to the repertoire of comic stories about actor-divinities in various and popular performances of the epics. Self-mocking irony and a touch of *shringara rasa* marks A Punjab Pastoral as typically Khushwant Singh's. G.D. Khosla's story is about a fortune lost for a bowl of curd. In Mulk Raj Anand's story, Lalaji converts his wealth into a golden bed to gain full control and security and is thereafter a prisoner in it.

In the hands of master craftsmen assembled here the stories are mostly

skillful. *Soorma Singh* by Balwant Singh meanders somewhat when juxtaposed to the easy confidence of the narrative style of K.A. Abbas. In the same way Yashpal's *Saadat* appears pale in comparison with the full blooded life of other stories.

Twelve of the stories have been translated by Khushwant Singh and some stories have been translated by the original authors themselves. It is a pity the editor has declared his reluctance to translate any more since his language is so free of stilted phrases or awkwardness, the usual pitfalls of translators.

The paper and printing are of excellent quality though a few misprints appear in the second half of the publication. The cover based on Punjab's famous 'Phulkari' style is most distinctive.

At the end of the book appears a list of authors in the order of stories as printed. One feels the want of dates for the stories, such is the interest aroused by them. Some of the contributions may have appeared in a 1965 publica-

tion edited by Khushwant Singh and Jaya Thadani under the same title. The collection as a whole is very readable and deserves to be popular.

Kalyani Dutta

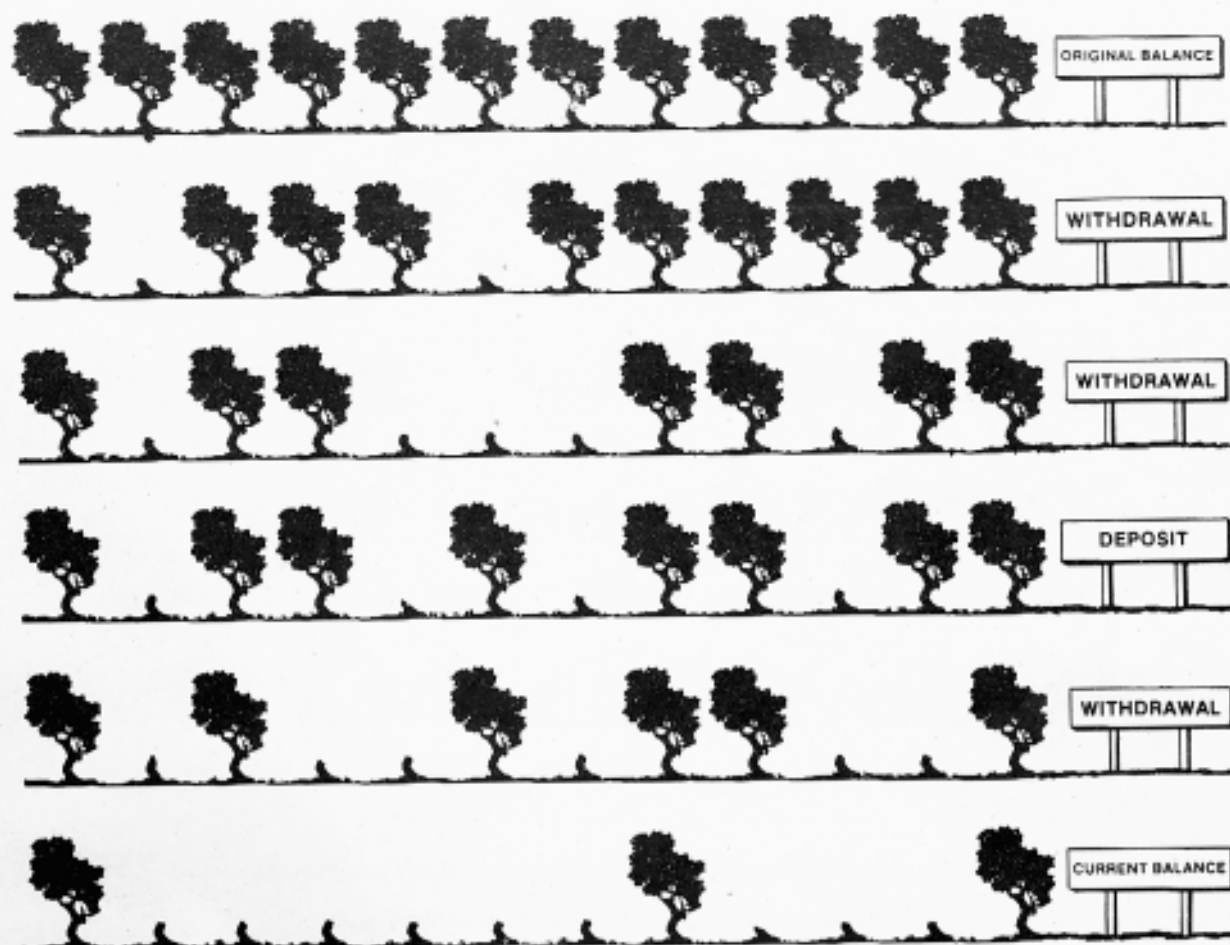
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यत्र कुत्रापि वा नादे लगति प्रथमं मनः ।
तत्र तत्र स्थिरीभूत्वा तेन सार्धं विलीयते । ।
विस्मृत्य सकलं बाह्य नादे दुग्धाम्बुवन्मनः ।
एकीभूयाथ सहसा चिवाकाशे विलीयते । ।
उदासीनस्ततो भूत्वा सदाभ्यासेन संयमी ।
उन्मनीकारक सद्यो नादमेवावधारयेत् । ।
सर्वचिन्तां समुत्सृज्य सर्वचेष्टाविवर्जितः ।
नादमेवानुसंदध्यान्नादे चित्तं विलीयते । ।
मकरन्दं पिबन्भृंगो गन्धान्नापेक्षते यथा ।
नादासक्तं सदा चित्तं विषय न हि कांक्षति । ।
यत्र कुत्रापि वा नादे लगति प्रथमं मनः ।
तत्र तत्र स्थिरीभूत्वा तेन सार्धं विलीयते । ।
विस्मृत्य सकलं बाह्य नादे दुग्धाम्बुवन्मनः ।
एकीभूयाथ सहसा चिवाकाशे विलीयते । ।
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मकरन्दं पिबन्भृंगो गन्धान्नापेक्षते यथा ।
नादासक्तं सदा चित्तं विषय न हि कांक्षति । ।

The mind having at first concentrated itself on any one sound fixes firmly to that and is absorbed in it.

The mind becoming insensible to the external impressions, becomes one with the sound as milk with water, and then becomes rapidly absorbed in Chidakasa (The Akasa where Chit prevails).

Being indifferent towards all objects, the Yogin having controlled his passions, should by continual practice concentrate his attention upon the sound which destroys the mind.

Having abandoned all thoughts and being freed from all actions, he should always concentrate his attention on the sound, and (then) his Chitta becomes absorbed in it.

Just as the bee drinking honey (alone) does not care for the colour, so the Chitta which is always absorbed in sound, does not long for sensual objects, as it is bound by the sweet smell of Nada and has abandoned its flitting nature.